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October 2015

MAGAZINE

Opening Doors

Renewed relationship with Cuba
brings opportunities, challenges

Global Skills

Office of the Month promotes
learning around the world

Victorian Gem

CG Melbourne strengthens
partnerships in Australia



Navigating through State Magazine: How to use this issue

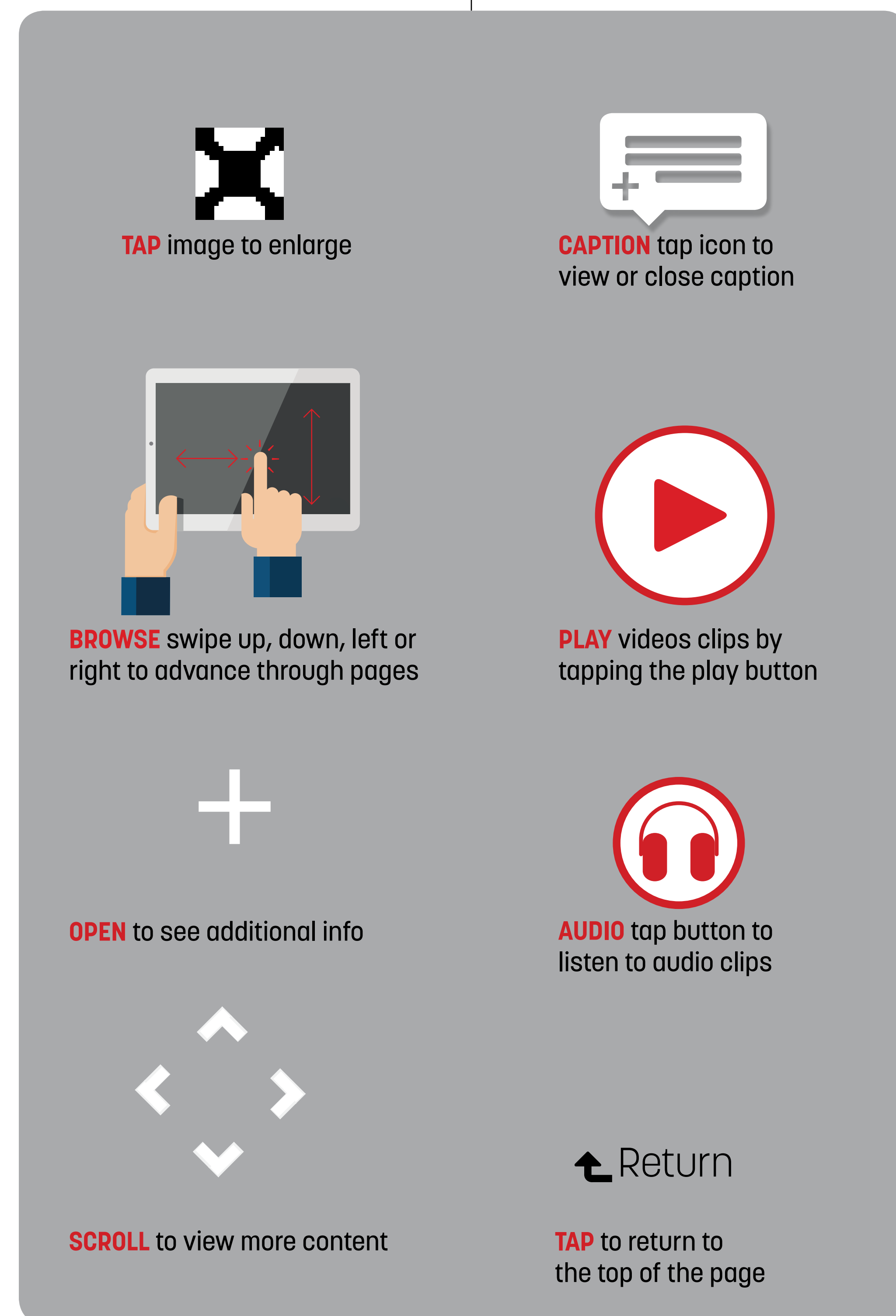
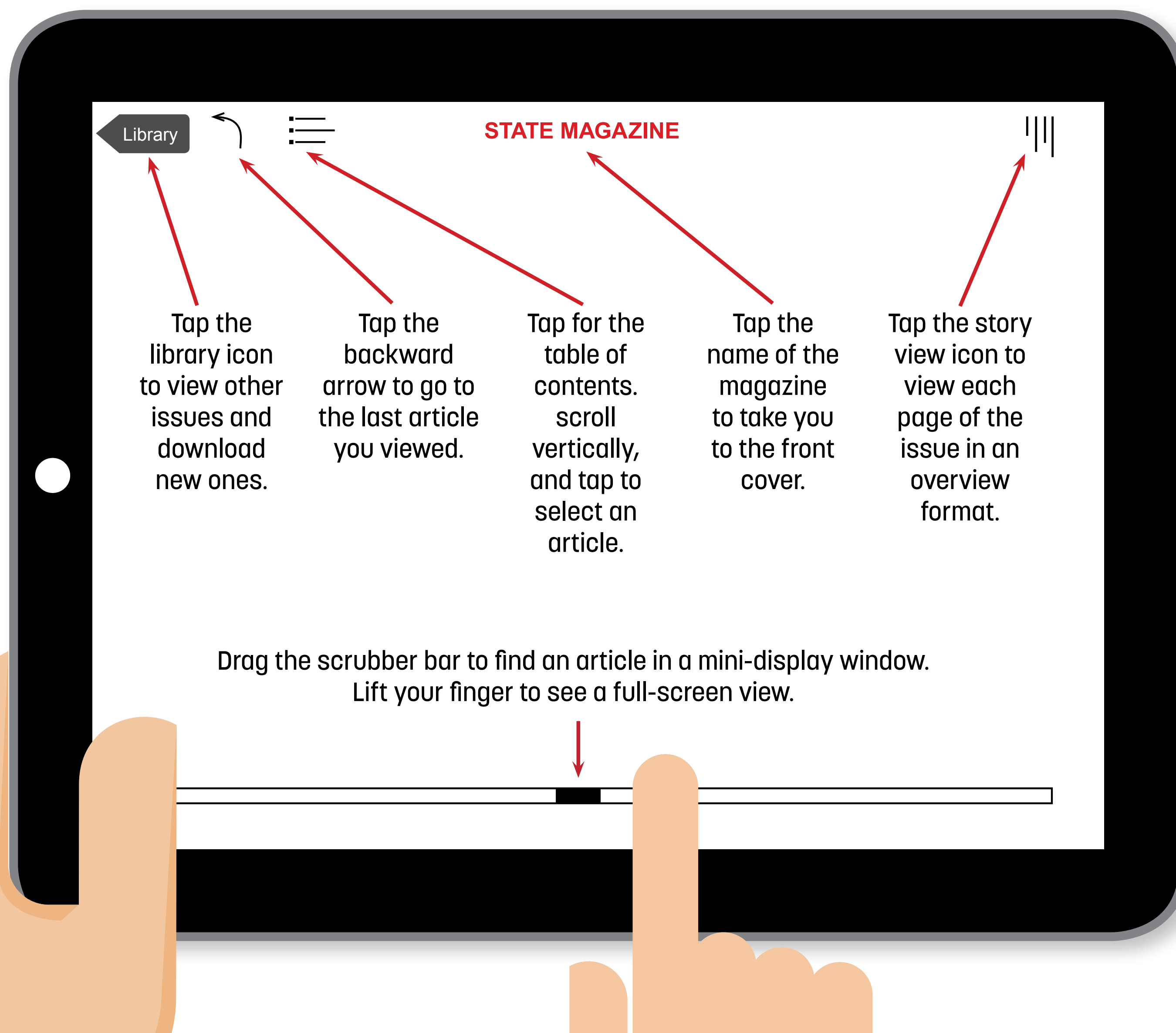
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In the Table of Contents and on the cover, all titles can be tapped to jump directly to an article.

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Cover: Limestone stacks near Loch Ard Gorge in Port Campbell National Park.

Video by Isaac D. Pacheco

Features

Meeting of Minds FS staff study at Naval War College



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STATE MAGAZINE



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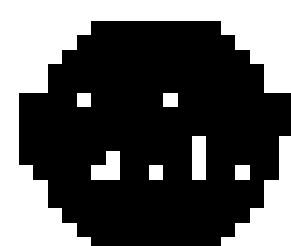
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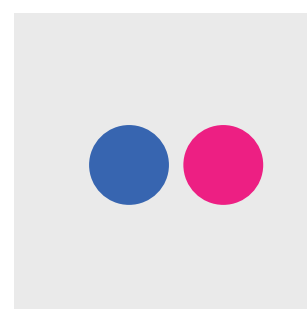


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Chargé d'Affaires William Duncan speaks to rally participants.
Photo by Yasue Namba

Embassy Mexico Rally Fights Trafficking

In observance of the World Day against Trafficking in Persons, the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City partnered with the state government of Michoacán and members of civil society to organize its second annual Rally against Human Trafficking on Aug. 2. The event brought together more than 100 participants from the public, government and NGOs to learn about human trafficking by stopping at points along a 2-kilometer walking route through the historical district of Morelia.

Since officials have been able to identify roughly 40,000 victims of trafficking each year, the embassy focused on teaching citizens how to recognize victims and discourage the patronage of organizations or businesses using trafficked labor. One of the stops along the route included washing a car window, a reminder that children who perform such tasks at stop lights are often trafficking victims.

Chargé d'Affaires William Duncan urged attendees to think about the “bigger criminal organization your few coins might be supporting each time a child tries to wash your car windows at a stop light” and to “reconsider purchasing the pirated goods that are often produced by the hands of forced labor.”

Myra Rojas of the NGO Infancia Comun said that events like these help make society aware of the harm done to children every time they are forced to work instead of being allowed to stay in school.

The post's NGO partners chose Michoacán for the second rally based on its history as a source for trafficked labor. The embassy hopes to increase its anti-trafficking activities with Michoacán as part of the Merida Initiative.

The U.S. Department of Justice organized the rally as part of its existing \$4 million Trafficking in Persons program, which is funded by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs under the Merida Initiative. ■



Event participants, some unnamed to protect their identities, gather onstage as one of them, Aaron McKenzie, at left, announces the raffle winners. With him is participant Molly Herrington, second from right.

Photo by Lina M.

Post Support Leads to LGBT Gala

June is internationally recognized as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Pride Month and often features pride parades, except in China, where they are not permitted. This June, however, local and foreign residents of Guangzhou found creative ways to raise awareness of LGBT issues and to celebrate Pride Month.

The U.S. Consulate General Guangzhou contributed considerably to this effort. It displayed a highly visible 24-foot-long banner announcing International Pride Month and hosted several LGBT-themed discussions in its public hall, in which hundreds of local Chinese citizens learned about creating a diverse and LGBT-friendly work environment. They also learned about the American LGBT civil rights movement and U.S. legal protections for LGBT individuals.

Because a new Chinese law requires NGOs to rely more on domestic funding in lieu of foreign funds, the post's nongovernmental partners for LGBT activities must find alternative funding options. The consulate's gala, therefore, was organized as a fundraiser by a local organization that promotes LGBT equality.

For six months prior to the event, the gala's hosts organized and liaised with local partners while also being transparent with local authorities, keeping them informed of the time, location, nature and purpose of the event throughout its planning stages.

Organizers also sought out potential sponsors and attendees. Commercial sponsors throughout Guangzhou were solicited to donate services or funds and, in return, received free advertising in the gala's brochure for attendees.

The event's catering was funded by a \$500 grant from Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies (GLIFAA). The event itself raised more than \$11,000.

The LGBT Pride 2015 event in Guangzhou displayed the power of collaboration between the U.S. Consulate General Guangzhou, other Guangzhou-based diplomatic missions, local businesses, community partners and LGBT community leaders. Participants said they felt invigorated and enthusiastic for next year's edition. ■



Mission staff enjoy the Tex-Mex fiesta in the Embassy Bangui cafeteria.
Photo by Kristina Hayden

Embassy Bangui Celebrates Staff Return

Almost a year after the arrival of the first American employees, the U.S. Embassy in Bangui is virtually unrecognizable, with 10 full-time American staff, facility upgrades and regular outreach activities taking place.

When Chargé d’Affaires (CDA) David Brown and then-DCM Joel Maybury arrived in the Central African Republic (CAR) last September via chartered Boeing 747, they were accompanied by a team of more than 30 temporary embassy staff and Marines, and several tons of equipment. They shared residences and ate MREs. The chancery’s second floor was a time capsule of what had been left behind when the post was evacuated in December 2012 and now overrun with pests.

The 2014 arrivals were, however, warmly welcomed back by the Locally Employed staff, who had maintained embassy operations under difficult circumstances during the 20-month drawdown, including 2014 FSN of the Year Phillip Makendebou.

Almost a year later, Embassy Bangui is revitalized. On Aug. 29, the mission hosted a Tex-Mex fiesta, complete with homemade tortillas and a piñata. The post’s cafeteria was filled with camaraderie and anticipation.

Since last year, the post has rededicated its Martin Luther King cultural center, unveiling updated equipment and supplies. The March ceremony featured Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the CDA and International Visitors Leadership Program alumna Catherine Samba-Panza, president of the CAR transitional government. The public affairs section is restarting English classes and will host a number of training sessions this fall for young women (public speaking) and for journalists (ethics and best practices).

The post’s housing and work spaces are also being revitalized with welcome kit amenities, water filtration systems and office equipment. The CDA is regularly hosting contacts for lunches and receptions at his residence, reminding Central Africans of the U.S. government’s commitment to supporting the people of CAR’s efforts to find peace and security.

△ SCROLL FOR MORE ▽



Immigrant Visa Chief Eva Coffey, at right, administers a mock immigrant visa oath for winners of the immigrant visa quiz held during the post's consular open house June 26.

Photo by Tsvetanka Dimitrova

Consular Open House Held in Sofia

Embassy employees attending the open house of the consular section at the U.S. Embassy in Sofia in June were shown the nonimmigrant visa application screen, took a quiz and posed questions, all to learn more about the section's work, including NIV adjudication, the IV process and providing American citizen services.

The consular section welcomed Locally Employed staff and Americans, and approximately one-fourth of embassy staff attended, filling the section's space and prompting other sections to start planning their own open houses.

Consul General Deborah L. Campbell said the section's work was a "mystery for many of our colleagues. The open house was an opportunity to show our colleagues what we do and, more importantly, to express our deep gratitude for the wonderful cooperation with all sections at the embassy."

The consular team offered several tours during the afternoon event, with each unit—fraud prevention, immigrant visas, American citizen services and nonimmigrant visas—offering presentations. Attendees were able to see what type of information a consular officer sees on the computer screen during an NIV interview (on a PowerPoint presentation with fictitious personal data) and participated in an IV quiz that presented several approaches for an applicant to take when seeking a visa. Winners received mock green cards. All heard some of the oddball questions posed by applicants to consular staff. Example: "Can you do something about my neighbor's barking dog?"

Open House tips are available from IV Chief Eva Coffey via [email](#). ■



Gathered with attendees at the consulate's American Center, are at center USAID Senior Advisor for International Education Christie Vilsack, in white jacket, and Dr. Jill Biden, in blue jacket. Also shown is Consul General Rena Bitter, front row, far right.

Photo by Minh Le

Post Supports Jill Biden's Vietnam Visit

As part of her trip to Vietnam, July 19-21, the vice president's wife, Dr. Jill Biden, led a delegation to Ho Chi Minh City to engage on issues of education, entrepreneurship and women's leadership. At the U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City's American Center, she joined 70 local high school English teachers for a workshop that highlighted Mission Vietnam's use of English language programming as a key outreach tool. Three English Language Fellows serving in Vietnam facilitated the discussion, which covered topics from cooperative learning to integrating critical thinking in lesson planning.

A lifelong educator, Dr. Biden spoke to groups on teaching strategies and motivational tools, and thanked participants for helping to shape Vietnam's next generation. Stories and pictures of Dr. Biden's participation were distributed widely via social media and covered in Vietnam's leading newspapers.

With Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Catherine Russell and Ambassador to Vietnam Ted Osius, Dr. Biden also toured VinEcom, one of Ho Chi Minh City's many rapidly expanding technology companies. Nguyen Hoang Uyen Vy, the CEO and a member of Forbes Vietnam's inaugural 30 Under 30 List, led the group through VinEcom's offices and said the company would soon launch a website designed to be "Vietnam's Amazon.com."

During remarks to the press, Dr. Biden said she was impressed with the company's growth and the fact that women made up 80 percent of its board of directors.

Dr. Biden and the delegation later met business leaders at a reception at Consul General Rena Bitter's residence, interacting with investors, entrepreneurs and Ho Chi Minh City's "community builders," a growing group of people who participate in organizations designed specifically to promote entrepreneurship. This group included the founders of startup.vn and other consulate partners supporting Vietnam's entrepreneurial ecosystem. The reception augmented mission efforts to promote entrepreneurship, angel investment and other nascent parts of the Vietnamese economy. ■



Voluntary Leave Bank Program Implemented

In December 2014, Deputy Secretary Heather Higginbottom and Acting Director General Hans Klemm announced the establishment of a new shared leave program: the Voluntary Leave Bank Program (VLBP) for Civil Service and Foreign Service employees. Open enrollment for membership and employee leave contributions began on Dec. 18 and the program was fully operational by Feb. 8 of this year. Two open enrollment periods, for membership and leave contributions, have since been held, and more are expected.

Currently, the VLBP has 1,215 members with 7,708 hours of contributed leave, plus 336 nonbank member employees who have contributed their use-or-lose annual leave totaling 9,256 hours. As of September 2015, 76 recipients have been approved by the bank board to receive contributions from the leave bank for personal or medical family emergencies.

The VLBP is a shared leave program similar to the Department's existing Voluntary Leave Transfer Program. However, the VLBP requires a voluntary membership and is operated by an appointed leave bank board. Employees who wish to join the leave bank and become a member must make an annual contribution equal to one pay period of annual leave accrual (four, six, or eight hours based on years of service) during an open enrollment or individual enrollment period for new employees. This pool of leave is then available for use by eligible leave bank members experiencing a personal or family medical emergency.

Leave bank members will be automatically re-enrolled with their minimum contribution deducted for each year that the leave bank program continues until such time as the member opts out of the program. Membership is automatically cancelled when an employee resigns, retires, transfers to another federal agency, or if there is a death in service. There are no refunds of hours deposited to the leave bank.

Bank operations and daily case management are handled by the Bureau of Human Resource's Shared Services (HR/SS) and Comptroller and Global Financial Services (CGFS) in Charleston. For more information on the VLBP program, visit the SharePoint [site](#) or [email](#). ■

Direct from the D.G.

ARNOLD CHACON
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE



A Commitment to Taking Care of Our People

October is Work-Life Wellness month. During the past decade, there has been a growing recognition in the private sector that supporting employee wellness is good for employees and for business. The Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, released in May, likewise underscores the importance of work-life wellness. Indeed, the move from the term “work-life balance,” with its implicit nod to the need to make trade-offs between work and life, to the more holistic concept of work-life wellness, shows an increasing understanding that work is as much a part of life as anything else - not something separate and distinct.

Still, it is not the only thing. We want employees to feel empowered and engaged at work and have the time and energy for themselves and their families. In short, we want our people to do well and be well.

Secretary of State Kerry is committed to incorporating wellness into State’s culture. Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources Higginbottom leads the Department’s efforts on this score through the Work-Life Wellness Leadership Council, which she created and chairs. People join the Department because of their passion for our mission and, in many cases, a desire to see the world and learn about other cultures. They stay because they recognize that, not only can they make a difference, they are also an integral part of a larger Department team that cares about our nation and the world, and those employees, in equal measure. That is why the Department consistently ranks among the best places to work in the federal government.

We have established a number of programs to support our employees’ personal and family needs and responsibilities, including flexible work arrangements, job-sharing and part-time work schedules. There is also access to emergency back-up day care and a new voluntary leave bank. We are developing an extended leave without pay option so employees can take time for personal and professional enrichment or attend to health and family issues.

Our commitment to the well-being of our people is supported by a growing body of research that suggests overwork and long hours at the office seldom result in better output and can reduce productivity by increasing employees’ vulnerability to illness. Healthy, motivated employees are much more likely to contribute to their organizations and add to the bottom line.

Winning the war for talent in today’s competitive labor market requires flexibility, creativity and the recognition that our greatest resource is, in fact, our people. As Director General and Director of Human Resources, my job is to recruit, retain and sustain a talented and diverse workforce. This means caring about and cultivating human beings, empowering them to realize their potential. If we are to succeed in creating a diverse, talented 21st century workforce equipped to take on tomorrow’s challenges, we must heed our credo—Mission First, People Always. ■

Arnold A. Chacon



Celebrating Two Key Anniversaries

This year marks the 70th anniversary of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), which we celebrate each October to raise awareness about various disability employment issues and honor the many contributions of Americans with disabilities. As we commemorate NDEAM this year, we also celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), landmark legislation enacted to prohibit discrimination based on disability.

The ADA prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, public services and communications. It was signed into law with the purpose of dismantling barriers to inclusion for people with disabilities. Throughout the past 25 years, many discriminatory policies, practices and barriers have been removed for people with disabilities as a result of requirements mandated by the ADA and other related laws, such as the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which covers federal employees and applicants with disabilities.

Today, thanks to many of these laws, building entrances are more accessible than they once were. We have also seen many changes in our daily lives such as sidewalk curb cuts and the development of text messaging, which was originally created as an accommodation for people with disabilities. Conveniences that we all take for granted began out of necessity to help people with disabilities to live fully integrated and productive lives. The Department has also taken a number of steps to provide equal access to employees with disabilities, such as the launch of a video-captioning unit to ensure that all official multimedia for internal and external clients are accessible to people with disabilities.

Thanks to increased awareness raised by NDEAM and protections afforded by the ADA, our nation has made a great deal of progress in ensuring equal opportunities and access for people with disabilities in all aspects of life, including employment. We are increasingly committed to appreciating our differences and resistant to all forms of discrimination. Yet, our work still isn't quite done.

To build upon achievements of the ADA and other civil rights laws that have changed our nation, we must go one step further and remove attitudinal barriers toward people with disabilities, in and out of the workplace. Attitudinal barriers often abound in unconscious contexts and thus aren't as easily identifiable as physical barriers. However, they still have a real and detrimental impact upon those subject to them.

Attitudinal barriers include assumptions and fears that impede meaningful communication between people with and without disabilities. Stigmas and stereotypes attached to disabilities or assumptions about what one can and cannot do because of a disability erode morale and negatively affect the workplace. While attitudinal barriers are arguably the most difficult to overcome, we must make a concerted effort to do so because they undermine the principles of equal opportunity and have the potential to obstruct the progress we've made.

As we celebrate the 70th anniversary of NDEAM and the 25th anniversary of the ADA, let's continue to work together to build upon the progress we've made. I encourage you to look around and reexamine your surroundings and beliefs, ask questions and consider how accessible your office and its resources are to others. Are you helping to create an environment where each and every individual feels comfortable bringing his or her whole self to work each day? Without regular self-analysis at every level, we risk unconsciously contradicting our principles by limiting access and opportunity. As we remove various barriers to equal opportunity for people with disabilities, we ultimately strengthen our efforts toward a diverse and inclusive government, nation and world. ■

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John M. Robinson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.



PULL TAB



OPENING DOORS

Mission Cuba sees
opportunities, challenges



By Craig Simons, consular officer, U.S. Embassy in Havana

When Secretary of State John Kerry marked the reopening of the U.S. Embassy in Cuba on Aug. 14, he spoke of history. Standing in front of the chancery building in Havana, his back to the aquamarine Straits of Florida, he reminded a crowd of diplomats, officials, journalists and hundreds of Cuban spectators that, for more than 50 years, U.S.-Cuban relations had been “suspended in the amber of Cold War politics.”

Since President Dwight Eisenhower closed the embassy in 1961, the United States has held 13 presidential elections, the Berlin Wall has crumbled and democracies have replaced communism throughout the former Soviet empire. Wars have been fought and wounds healed. Yet, it has taken “a courageous decision” by the United States and Cuba to “stop being the

prisoners of history and to focus on the opportunities of today and tomorrow,” Kerry said under a baking Caribbean sun.

That decision to re-establish diplomatic relations has created both new opportunities and challenges. From 1977 until July 20 of this year, when bilateral relations officially resumed, the United States and Cuba had operated “interests

sections”—managed with the help of the Swiss government—in their respective capitals. But in both nations, the number of each nation’s diplomats was limited, as were their activities, and their travel outside the capitals restricted. Government-to-government relations were “locked in the past,” Kerry reminded.

Since the Dec. 17, 2014 announcement that Washington and

Opening Spread: The U.S. flag flies before the U.S. Embassy in Havana.

Photo by Scott Hamilton

Right: Secretary of State John Kerry and Chargé d’Affaires Jeffrey DeLaurentis pay their respects as the U.S. national anthem is played during the flag-raising at the ambassador’s residence in Havana Aug. 14.

State Department photo



Secretary of State John Kerry meets with the U.S. Embassy's children during his August visit.
State Department photos

**WARS HAVE BEEN
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– SECRETARY KERRY**

Havana would re-establish relations, however, doors have begun to open. As part of a series of changes agreed to by both governments, diplomats are no longer required to request permission to leave the capitals, permitting freer reporting and easier interactions with citizens.

The Cuban government also lifted a cap on the number of diplomats allowed to serve at Embassy Havana, a shift expected to produce a gradual increase in the size of the mission. A total of 350 people serve there now, including more than 50 full-time Americans.

For diplomats serving in Cuba, the greatest opportunity may be a new openness evident among Cuban officials. Officers across Embassy Havana sections have noted an increased willingness

among Cuban counterparts to work together. In July, for example, Cuba's Foreign Ministry helped the embassy's public affairs section arrange for officials to participate in the International Visitors Leadership Program, a first for the Cuban government. The public affairs section has also worked with the Cuban Ministry of Education to develop a program supporting English-language teaching and recently facilitated the first TOEFL test offered in Cuba.

“Government of Cuba ministries have become more accessible,” said Lydia Barraza, the embassy's deputy public affairs officer. “The Cuban government and Cuban institutions are seeing the benefits of engagement.”

The consular section also seized on the political shift. Before July 20, Cuban officials handled the intake of all Cuban visa applicants, taking their personal information and organizing groups to enter the consular section.





Secretary of State John Kerry waves to tourists before looking at a vintage Chevrolet Impala during his walk through the Plaza de San Francisco in Old Havana.
State Department photo



Since the re-establishment of diplomatic relations, the embassy has taken charge, a shift that Consul General Brendan Mullarkey said “greatly improved customer service” and has resulted in positive feedback from visa applicants.

The political and economic

For Ambassador Jeffrey DeLaurentis, Embassy Havana’s chargé d’affaires, two key benefits of the re-establishment of ties have been that there are now many more opportunities for cooperation with Cuban officials and that American diplomats are better able to advocate

As with any change, however, the reopening of Embassy Havana has also created new challenges. Following the December announcements by Presidents Barack Obama and Raul Castro, for example, U.S. travel to Cuba has spiked, rising 35 percent. Mullarkey and other officers noted that as the number of Americans traveling to Cuba has grown, so have demands for American citizen services.

For management officers, the chief challenge may simply be meeting an expected surge in demand for officer housing and supplies in a country where decades of economic stagnation have left buildings crumbling and store shelves poorly stocked. For years, Foreign Service officers have dealt with the nation’s creaking infrastructure. Incoming shipments of household goods and vehicles often take months to clear customs, despite the proximity of the state

“HAVING A NORMAL RELATIONSHIP WITH CUBA WILL ENABLE US TO ADVOCATE BETTER, TO GET TO KNOW THE COUNTRY BETTER, AND TO BETTER SERVE THE GROWING NUMBER OF AMERICANS COMING TO CUBA ...”
— AMBASSADOR JEFFREY DELAURENTIS

section, for its part, kicked off a new human rights dialogue with the Cuban government in March and is beginning to establish working-level government contacts. “It’s not business as usual yet, but officials are a lot more open to meeting with us,” said Political Section Chief Justin Davis.

for universal values like the freedom of speech and the freedom of assembly.

“Having a normal relationship with Cuba will enable us to advocate better, to get to know the country better, and to better serve the growing number of Americans coming to Cuba,” DeLaurentis said.

of Florida, and Internet service is severely limited across most of the island. Even in Havana, markets often run out of day-to-day necessities like butter and milk.

Embassy Havana plans to increase the size of its officer corps, adding Department of State officers and staff from other agencies, in an environment that Deputy Chief of Mission Scott Hamilton described as “one of the most exciting and rewarding in the Foreign Service today.” Potential bidders, he said, “should have initiative, creativity and energy, and understand that it is a

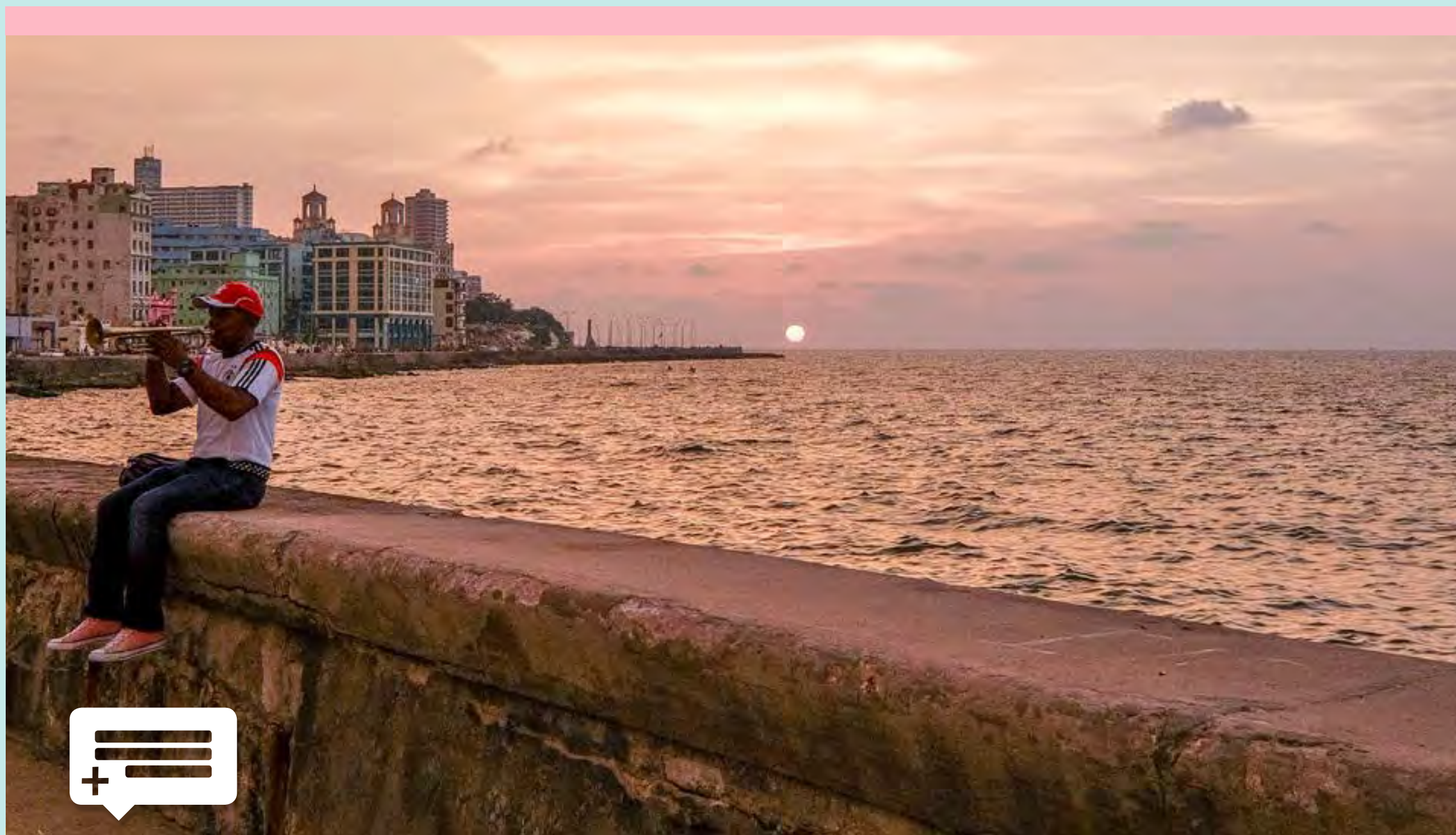
privilege to help foster broader, deeper and more productive relationships between Americans and Cubans.”

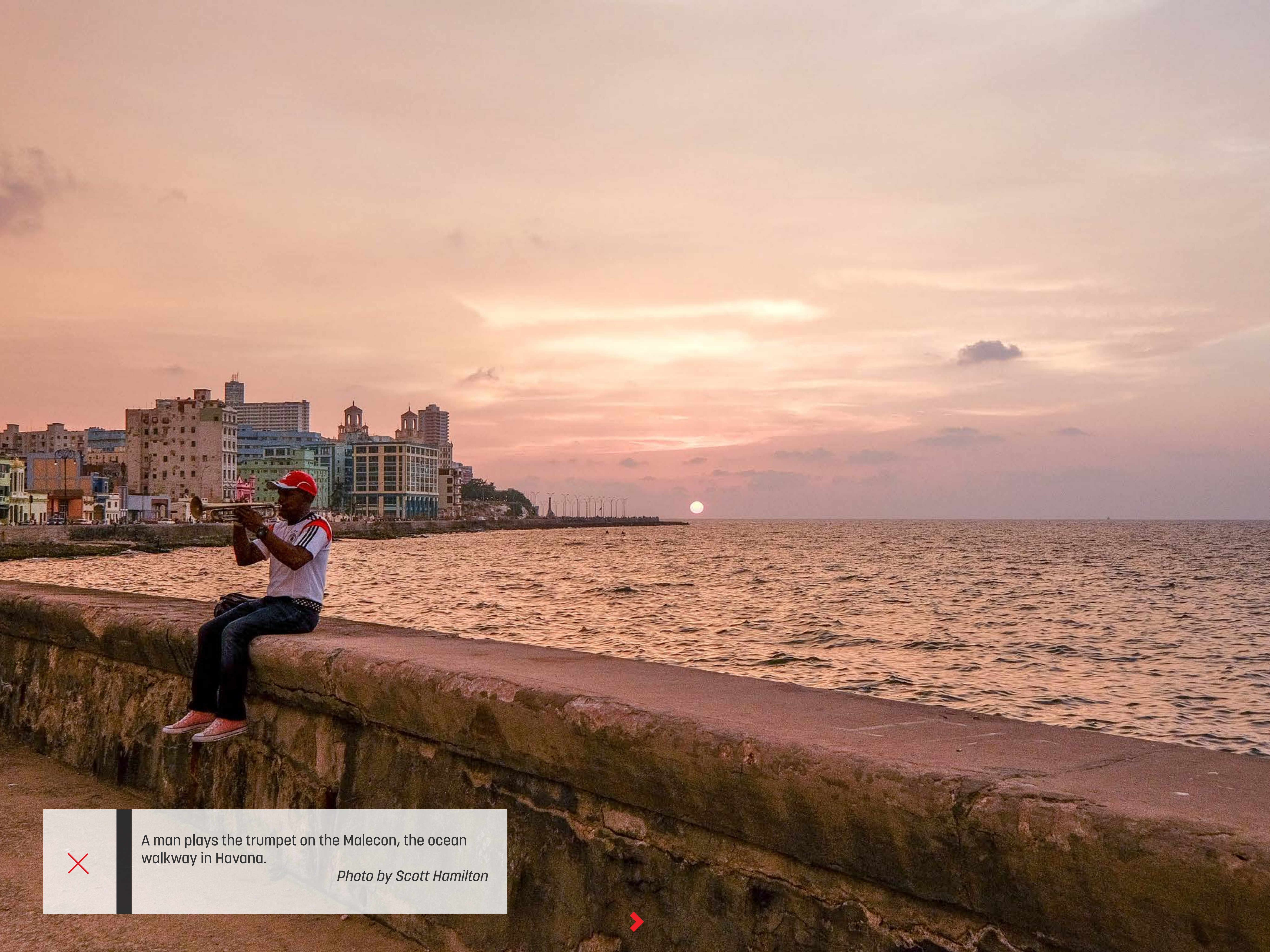
Other complexities—and opportunities—will arise as U.S. diplomats try to build official relationships. The U.S. government continues to call on Cuban officials to improve human rights and allow greater space for civil society. But embassy officers recognize a need to balance support for independent Cuban voices with discussion and, hopefully, cooperation with state-run organizations and Cuban officials. Deputy Public Affairs Officer Barraza noted that the desire to engage with both official Cuban media and independent Cuban journalists, for example, had created tensions. “We want to make sure we build

relationships with all sections of Cuban society,” she said.

Such challenges may be unavoidable as the United States and Cuba repair their long-frayed relationship. “Whether it’s figuring out how we grow, how the changing economic and political situation will affect us, or how to communicate in a much broader way with Cuban officials and civil society and all Cuban citizens, now we have a unique opportunity for Foreign Service officers to help define an important relationship across the board,” Ambassador DeLaurentis said.

No one expects the way forward to be easy. Standing beside the newly unfurled Stars and Stripes on Aug. 14, Secretary Kerry told the crowd that the two nations had started down a “better path ... without any illusions about how difficult it might be.” ■





A man plays the trumpet on the Malecon, the ocean walkway in Havana.

Photo by Scott Hamilton

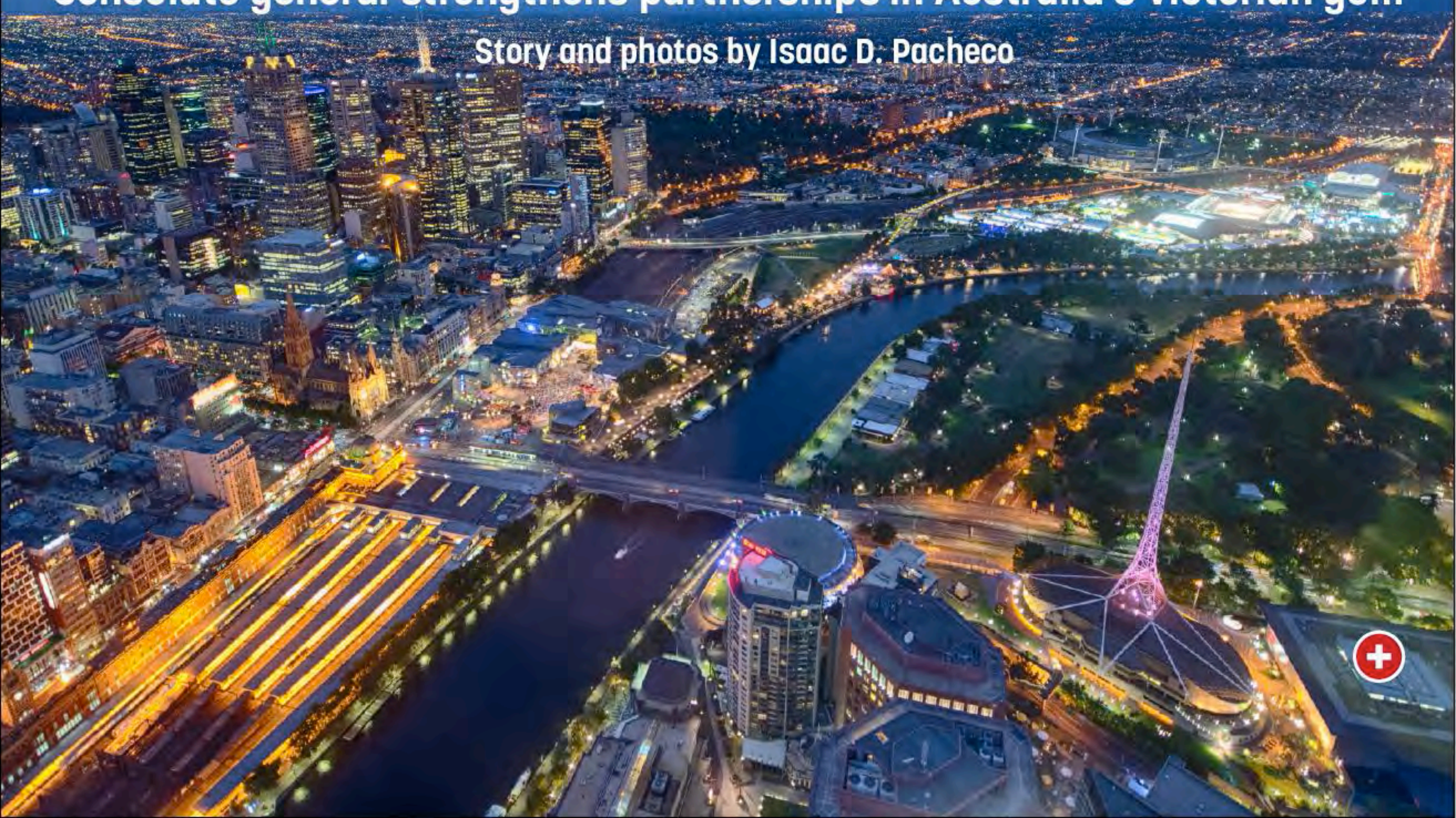


Post of the Month

MELBOURNE

Consulate general strengthens partnerships in Australia's Victorian gem

Story and photos by Isaac D. Pacheco



An aerial night photograph of Melbourne, Australia. The city's central business district (CBD) is visible on the left, with numerous skyscrapers and buildings illuminated. The Yarra River flows through the center of the image. On the right side, the Rod Laver arena is brightly lit, glowing against the dark night sky. The overall scene captures the vibrant urban landscape of Melbourne at dusk.

As dusk falls over the CBD, Rod Laver arena
(far right) glows during an Australian Open
semi-final match.

[Tap here to see full Image](#)

Melbourne

Consulate general strengthens partnerships in Australia's Victorian gem

Story and photos by Isaac D. Pacheco

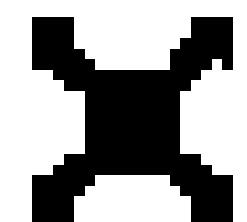
The images that people often associate with Australia are those from tourism guides depicting the Sydney Opera House's distinctive white shells reflecting off the surface of that city's beautiful harbor, the towering red sandstone monolith of Uluru (Ayers Rock) set against the rugged landscape of the Outback, Queensland's beautiful Gold Coast beaches teeming with sun-soaked vacationers and the Great Barrier Reef's vibrant underwater ecosystem. These iconic sites are undoubtedly captivating places to visit, but they represent only a fraction of the country's unique cultural and environmental offerings.

"Australia is very big and very diverse," said Bill Furnish, public affairs officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Melbourne.


"Our consular district spans a third of the continent, from tropical Darwin up north to Tasmania at the southern tip."

While Canberra serves as Australia's political capital and Sydney is its most populous city, the distinction of cultural and sports capital belongs to Melbourne, located in the southeastern state of Victoria.

Melbourne's temperate coastal climate, cosmopolitan setting and world class cuisine, along with numerous entertainment venues and a flourishing arts scene,

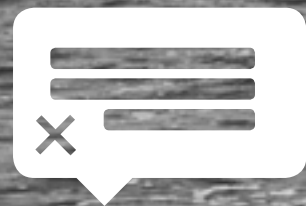


TAP image
to enlarge



Capitalizing on the persistently strong winds that blow across the region, a group of sailors take to the Derwent River near Hobart, Tasmania, on a cloudy day.

[Tap here to see full Image](#)



have made it one of the country's most popular tourism destinations (and also one of the most expensive). As the birthplace of the nation's most cherished pastime, Australian Rules football, and home to the Australian Open, a Formula 1 track and the fabled Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), Melbourne also makes a strong case for being Australia's premier sports city.

"Melbourne is a vibrant, world-class city," said Consul General Frankie Reed, who arrived in March after serving as ambassador to Fiji, "and it's easy to see why The Economist has named it as the 'World's Most Livable City' for five years running."

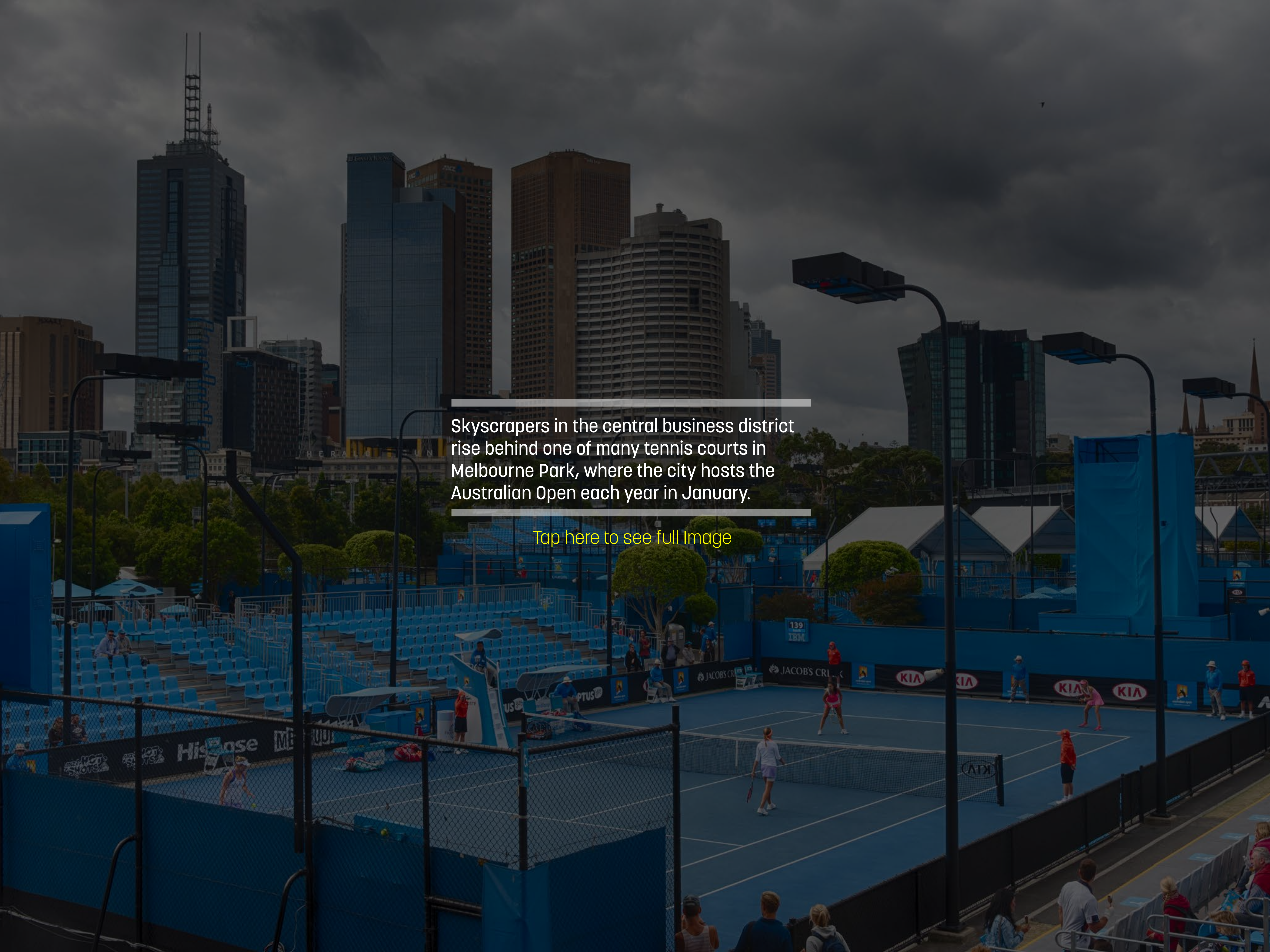
Melbourne hosts the headquarters of nearly 40 percent of the country's multinational companies, including two of Australia's "big four" banks (ANZ and National Australia Bank) and two of the world's largest mining companies, BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto. A number of giant U.S. companies, including Boeing, GM Holden, Ford, ExxonMobil, Alcoa, Kraft, Mission Foods and others are headquartered in the state of Victoria. Hundreds of smaller U.S. companies have operations in Australia.

"The United States enjoys a robust economic relationship with Australia," said Vanessa Colon, pol/econ officer. "We are Australia's largest foreign investor (\$159 billion), and Australia's investment footprint in the United States also is growing rapidly; Australia currently is the 10th largest foreign direct investor in the United States (\$56 billion).

"Our bilateral goods trade has nearly doubled since the 2005 implementation of the U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement, from \$21.8 billion to \$35.5 billion, and Australia is now the United States' 15th largest export market."

Aside from strong economic ties, cultural similarities and shared values have helped the United States and Australia forge an enduring partnership over the past century. The U.S. Consulate General in Melbourne works to sustain that relationship through various forms of outreach to a diverse cross-section

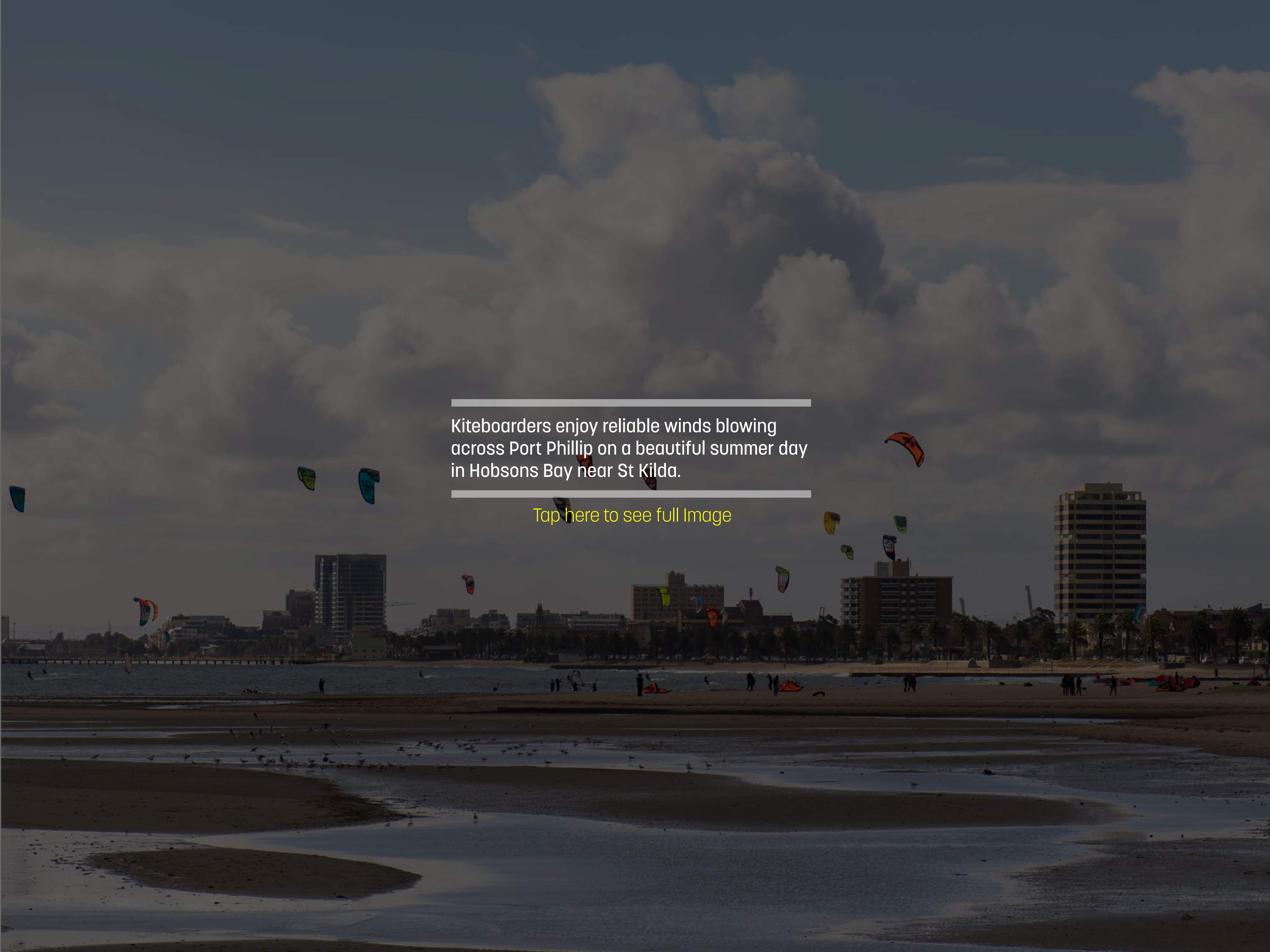


A wide-angle photograph of a tennis court in Melbourne Park. The court is blue with white lines. Several players are visible on the court. In the background, a dense cluster of skyscrapers rises against a dark, overcast sky. The foreground shows the blue seating area and a black fence. A text box is overlaid on the image.

Skyscrapers in the central business district
rise behind one of many tennis courts in
Melbourne Park, where the city hosts the
Australian Open each year in January.

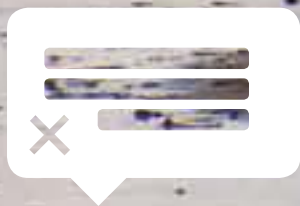
[Tap here to see full Image](#)





Kiteboarders enjoy reliable winds blowing
across Port Phillip on a beautiful summer day
in Hobsons Bay near St Kilda.

[Tap here to see full Image](#)





A street artist spray paints a mural on a portion of the wall lining Hosier Lane, one of several streets in Melbourne where graffiti is legal.

[Tap here to see full Image](#)



of the country's population. CG Melbourne is responsible for one of the largest geographic consular districts in the world, covering more than 1 million square miles (one-third of Australia's landmass) and about 40 percent of its population and economic activity.

"We're lucky in the fact that we have an amazing bilateral relationship with Australia, and our consular work here reinforces that,"

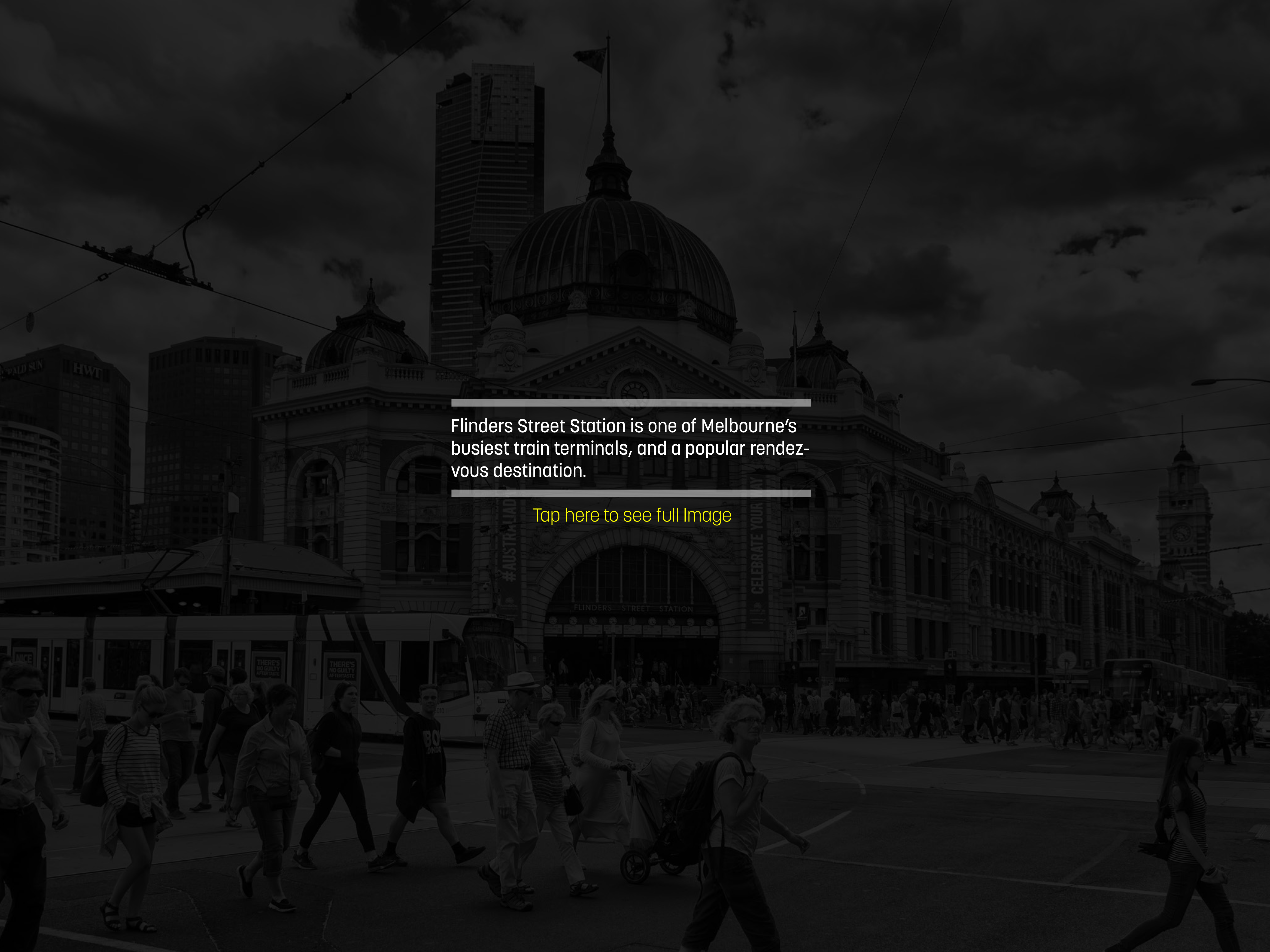
"Our bilateral goods trade has nearly doubled since the 2005 implementation of the U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement from \$21.8 billion to \$35.5 billion, and Australia is now the United States' 15th largest export market." - Vanessa Colon, pol/econ officer

said Kimberly Furnish, consular chief. "We're out in the district a lot with frequent visits to Tasmania, Adelaide [where, outside of Melbourne, the largest group of Americans reside], Darwin and Alice Springs. We visit those places and provide passport and report of birth abroad services, among other things. At any given time there could be more than 150,000 Americans within our consular district, so, it's really quite large."

No Melbourne visit is complete without a trip to one of the city's famous laneway cafés for a bite to eat or a creamy flat white (Australia's better version of a latte).







Flinders Street Station is one of Melbourne's
busiest train terminals, and a popular rendez-
vous destination.

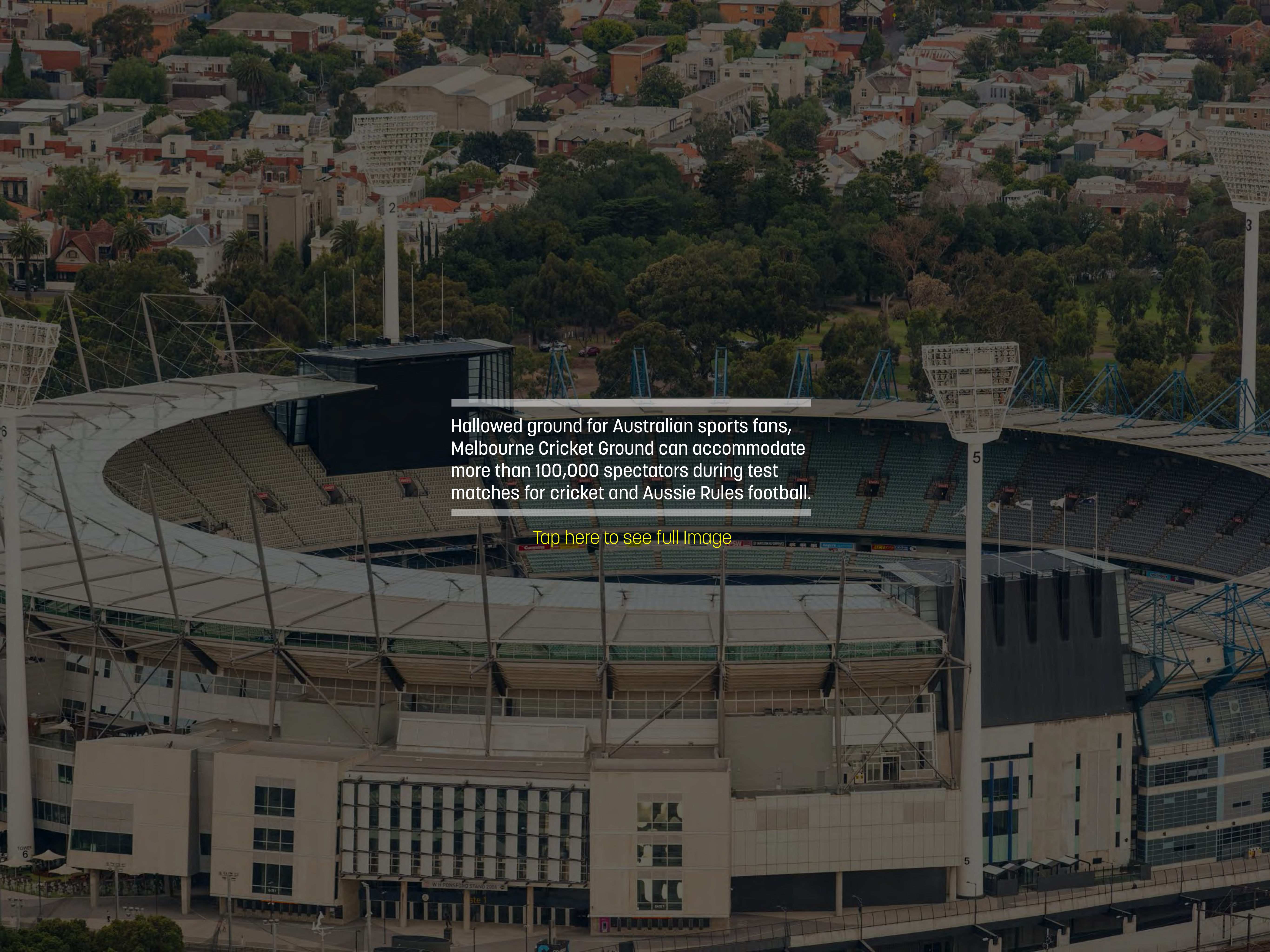
[Tap here to see full Image](#)

Along with outreach to its massive district, the consular section processes more than 20,000 nonimmigrant visas each year, primarily for third-country nationals. With the Melbourne metropolitan area expected to surpass Sydney within the next decade, CG Melbourne is preparing for a drastic increase in demand for its already popular services.

“This post has changed markedly since I arrived here six years ago,” said Gabrielle Connellan, cultural affairs specialist. “We used to not even have an officer in the public affairs section, and we’ve expanded from two people to seven. We now have a youth affairs specialist, which is the only position of its kind in the country, and we also have the Marine force rotation, which has really changed the way that we view part of a district that used to be sleepy and a little bit quiet for us.”

Since 2012, U.S. Marines have conducted six-month rotations in Darwin as part of a bilateral effort to bolster regional security and improve interoperability between the nations’ armed forces, an initiative President Obama announced in Australia in 2011 with a goal of establishing a rotational presence of up to 2,500 Marines. The enduring military alliance between the United States and Australia goes back to World War I when Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) troops fought valiantly in support of the Allied forces during the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign. Australian troops were also integral partners during numerous World War II battles and even hosted the 1st Marine Division at MCG after the Marines’ fierce and costly Guadalcanal siege. The kindness and generosity of Australians during the Marines’ recuperation period left a lasting impression and paved the way for a partnership that continues to this day.

“Since World War I, the United States has never gone into battle, any battle, anywhere, without Australia at our side. Our values are the same. We both cherish freedom and are willing to fight for it. That has been proven in



Hallowed ground for Australian sports fans,
Melbourne Cricket Ground can accommodate
more than 100,000 spectators during test
matches for cricket and Aussie Rules football.

[Tap here to see full Image](#)






A large, glowing mouth greets visitors to Luna Park, a historic surfside amusement park in Melbourne's St Kilda neighborhood that has operated since 1912.

[Tap here to see full Image](#)



both blood and treasure by Australia since WWI,” said U.S. Ambassador to Australia John Berry. “The alliance is more than just the military. We’re tied up on investment, trade, economic strategy, intel, scientific research, culture ... It has an emotional level that not many of our alliances have.”

Two of the district’s most memorable sights are The Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne, which honors all of Australia’s service members, and the Great Ocean Road, the world’s largest war memorial, which is an easy day trip drive from the city. The Great Ocean Road was built between 1919 and 1932 by returned WWI soldiers in honor of their fallen brethren and is today one of the country’s premier scenic byways, providing visitors with breathtaking vistas of one of the country’s most spectacular coastal landscapes.



The Shrine of Remembrance, which honors Australia's fallen service members, is one of Melbourne's best known landmarks.

[Tap here to see full Image](#)





THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD

Built between 1919 and 1932 by returned WWI soldiers in honor of their fallen brethren, the road is the world's largest war memorial and an Australian National Heritage site.



THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD

Wind, rain and waves conspire to eat away at the "Razorback" formation in Port Campbell National Park.

◀ SWIPE IMAGE FOR SLIDESHOW ▶



THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD

A high-dynamic-range photo highlights the otherwise subtle bands of color in the different layers of sedimentation that make up the Twelve Apostles limestone stacks.

◀ SWIPE IMAGE FOR SLIDESHOW ▶

THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD

The limestone stacks near Loch Ard Gorge in Port Campbell National Park stand in seeming defiance of the relentless ocean.

◀ SWIPE IMAGE FOR SLIDESHOW ▶



THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD

The sand beaches near the Twelve Apostles formations are a popular draw for locals and international tourists alike.



◀ SCROLL TO VIEW PANORAMA ▶

The “Razorback” rock formation in Port Campbell National Park gets its name from its likeness to a flat razor when viewed from above.



“You can really see what is wonderful about Melbourne,” said former consul general, and current U.S. Ambassador to Palau, Amy Hyatt. “It’s funny how familiar Australia feels to Americans in terms of the culture. There is the same frontier spirit that we have in the U.S., the same can-do attitude, more of an optimistic view.”

The quaint Victorian towns and pristine beaches that dot the road’s 243-km (151-mile) stretch along Australia’s southeastern coast are popular domestic vacation destinations and magnets for international tourists looking to take in some beautiful scenery. The Port Campbell area in particular is notable for its magnificent limestone and sandstone rock formations, including Loch Ard Gorge, The Grotto, London Arch and The Twelve Apostles.

With its wealth of natural and cultural treasures, it’s not difficult to see why Australia’s second-largest city and surrounding state are consistently rated by media sources as among the most livable places in the world.

“I really can’t say enough good things about living here. It’s so like the United States in many ways, and the ways that we’re different are what makes the tour exciting,” said Kimberly Furnish. “Australians are among the friendliest, most giving, wonderfully natured people I know. It will be hard to say goodbye to Australia.” ▣

Tap to play video ▶





Capital: Canberra
Government Type: Federal Parliamentary democracy/Commonwealth realm
Area: 7,741, 220 sq km

Population: 22,752, 014
Cities: Sydney (4.5 million), Melbourne (4.2 million), Brisbane (2.2 million), Perth (1.9 million)
Languages: English, Mandarin, Italian, Arabic, Cantonese, Vietnamese

Religions: Protestant (30%), Catholic (25%), Orthodox and other Christian (6%), Buddhist (3%), Muslim (2%), Hindu (1%), none or unspecified (32%)
Export partners: China, Singapore, Japan, U.S., Thailand, Indonesia, Hong Kong

Import partners: China, Singapore, Japan, U.S., Thailand, South Korea, Indonesia
Currency: Australian dollar
Internet country code: .au



EMPOWERING EXCELLENCE

Bureau promotes disability rights



During the past year, the Cambodian government and Special Olympics, with U.S. support, have been recruiting more than 1,000 people with intellectual disabilities in the nation's rural areas to compete in Special Olympics Cambodia. This unique program offers specialized training to improve athletes' health, discover new strengths and skills, experience teamwork and success, and possibly even represent Cambodia in the Special Olympics World Games.

This is just one example of a program launched by posts in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP) to promote the rights of people with disabilities and include them in all aspects of society. Another example: In July, the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok hosted a celebration of the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that also gave the Thai Special Olympics Team a festive send-off as they headed to the 2015 World Games in Los Angeles.

Along with partners in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), EAP has worked to raise the status of people with disabilities across the region. Through engagement with civil society groups, disabled people's organizations (DPOs) and international exchange programs, EAP has promoted the rights of some of the world's most vulnerable people.

EAP has engaged on the issue in Mongolia, for example. After interacting with female sitting-volleyball players from Mongolia who were participating in a SportsUnited visitors program to the United States, ECA Program Officer Ann Cody said the "visitors were positively struck by the warm greetings and acceptance they received from Americans, starting with their

Opening Spread: Twelve sitting-volleyball coaches and athletes traveled from Mongolia to Oklahoma City through the Department's Empowering Women and Girls through Sports Initiative for a two-week sports exchange program featuring sitting-volleyball clinics and school tours.

State Department photo



Special Advisor for International Disability Rights Judy Heumann greets students at Special School Number 116 in Mongolia.

State Department photo

touchdown in San Francisco. Americans with disabilities are more visible in our communities and people are accustomed to sharing public spaces with us thanks to strong U.S. disability rights laws. This is not the case in Mongolia.”

To combat this situation, the U.S. Embassy in Ulaanbaatar has been deepening contacts among DPOs and within the nation’s government agencies during the past two years to improve the quality of life for Mongolia’s disabled citizens. This engagement has extended to the most senior levels, including Ambassador Piper Campbell, Special Advisor for International Disability Rights (SADR) Judy Heumann and a principal author of the ADA, John Wodatch. The three remain engaged with government and civil society representatives, seeking to revise Mongolia’s disability rights legislation.

“We appreciate the leadership role the Mongolian government has been playing, as they work with disabled people’s organizations to advance the rights of disabled people,” Heumann said.

After Heumann visited Guangzhou in April 2014, First And Second Tour (FAST) officers at the U.S. Consulate there conceived a series of events focusing on the challenges people with disabilities face in employment and helping them prepare for job applications. In June 2014, they teamed with the British Consulate to host a one-day seminar for 30 students, teachers and alumni of a Guangzhou degree program for people with disabilities. The event aimed to hone resume writing and interview skills, and introduced attendees to human resource professionals to discuss workplace expectations, workplace discrimination, how to deal with job applicants’ lack of confidence, and how to ask employers for job-related accommodations.

The FAST group then organized sessions on resume and cover letter writing, conducted a mock interview boot camp, and in March 2015, held a diversity job fair connecting job applicants with disabilities with interested employers. Attendees appreciated guidance on presenting their disability as an asset to prospective employers and helped employers understand how to more

effectively engage south China's community of people with disabilities. Future events are already being planned.

Similarly, the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo has during the past few years used International Visitor Leadership Programs (IVLPs), expert speaker programs and other initiatives to promote disability rights. (Japan is developing legislation to facilitate its ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.)

Meanwhile, the Taiwan Association for Disability Rights, which actively lobbies for legislation and raises public awareness, was started by an IVLP participant who was inspired by his time in the United States and his interaction with disability rights activists from around the world. Stella Young, an Australian comedian and disability rights activist, also visited the United States on an IVLP.

DRL's Global Program

Senior Program Officer Ramiro Martinez develops global programs for disability rights. "People and especially children with mental and/or physical disabilities are often ostracized from society," he observed. "In many communities and countries around the world, including where family honor is critically important, family members often disallow their children or other family members with disabilities from participating in society out of embarrassment."



In July, Mission Thailand hosted guests representing the special needs community, including Thailand's Special Olympics Team, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

State Department photo

EAP wants to reverse this experience and empower disabled people to be active members of their local communities. This is often accomplished through work with local programs for disabled people, such as the Lao Disabled Women's Development Centre in Vientiane, Laos. The Centre teaches vocational skills to women who have disabilities or who assist people with disabilities, and have had little or no access to education or training, and limited livelihood opportunities.

Another EAP strategy is to promote the showing of the documentary "Lives Worth Living" throughout the EAP region; the film traces the disability rights movement in the United States. Often Heumann shows the film and then answers questions from local government officials, civil society members, students and others.

In the Republic of Korea, the showing of the documentary and talks by the film's director, Eric Neudel, and Heumann, were part of the U.S. Embassy in Seoul's disability/inclusivity programming. Embassy leadership also participated in the 2013 Special Olympics World Winter Games, held in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, and in an international disability rights conference.

Advocating for disability rights offers EAP the opportunity to engage with key countries on human



Chargé d'Affaires W. Patrick Murphy greets a member of Thailand's Special Olympics Team at the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok's celebration of the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Photo by Photo by Suphakorn Niamthanom

rights more broadly. For instance, Chinese and U.S. officials collaborated to improve the lives of disabled people through an event in China in November 2014 called Equal Access, Inclusive Development for Persons with Disabilities. The two economies then co-sponsored the establishment of an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) “Group of Friends on Disability Issues,” which seeks to improve inclusion of disability across the economies in the free trade organization. At its inaugural meeting in September 2015, in Cebu, the Philippines, Heumann joined other APEC members to discuss regional cooperation to improve educational and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Moreover, U.S. cooperation with Vietnam on disability rights since the normalization of diplomatic relations demonstrates closer collaboration between the two governments. For instance, Vietnam’s historic ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was the first voting session of the National Assembly that U.S. Embassy personnel were allowed to attend.

Heumann has since pledged U.S. cooperation as Vietnam moves to implement the CRPD and involve civil society in the development and enforcement of regulations.

While there are many areas for improvement on the rights of the disabled in EAP countries, EAP is working to advance those rights in partnership with host-nation governments and civil society. Together, we can promote a global society marked by inclusion, respect and prosperity for all persons. ■

CHISINAU OUTREACH

Online effort boosts English teachers' skills

By Hannah Alberts, former intern, Office of Eastern European Affairs/EUR

The public diplomacy team at the U.S. Embassy in Chisinau has, in the past year, expanded engagement with Moldovan communities through efforts to improve the effectiveness of Moldova's English-language instructors and reach out to educators and students in the nation's breakaway region of Transnistria.

Post's efforts were supercharged by using online programming.

The initiatives to improve the quality of English-language instruction include encouraging Moldovan teachers to incorporate English-language blogging as an instructional tool.

The project promotes students' blogging both as a vehicle for English learning and as a key to unlock the wealth of free online teaching aids. The effort also addresses the dearth of technology training in Moldovan schools, where there is no formal training on using such Web tools as blogs, wikis and social networks.

Post's English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Blogging School began with just 24 participants and required only \$7,000 in funding. It now involves hundreds of English-language instructors throughout Moldova. During the school's initial six-month session, its local implementer, the American Councils Moldova, used funding from an Innovation Fund for English Language Programs grant to bring together English instructors from 15 Moldovan regions.

Trainers from American Councils, Peace Corps and the Fulbright program used face-to-face and online instruction to instruct Moldovan teachers in how to use blogs and other online tools to enhance learning. The project's hands-on learning environment required participants to put their new skills into practice, and students and instructors interacted primarily through the central project blog and weekly Google Hangouts sessions.

Participants submitted all of their work as blog posts and were encouraged to interact with one another by posting comments and questions on peers' submissions. The assignments often involved interactive activities that brought the teachers' new skills back into their home classrooms. In one assignment, for instance, each teacher organized a video chat between his or her own students and an American mentor. Teachers then shared the results as photo and video slideshows on their classroom blogs and encouraged students to post their personal reflections in the blogs' comments section.

The Blogging School garnered positive reviews from participants. Oxana Cazacu, an EFL teacher in Cimislia, Moldova, spoke of having "learned how to turn from a traditional, boring, old-fashioned teacher into a modern, active and flexible one. I learned about new methods of teaching, new ways to communicate, assess, evaluate, involve and motivate students to learn English interactively." Each teacher took his or her new skills back home, launching a classroom or school blog as the final component of the project.

After completing the EFL Blogging School, the teachers who participated shared their knowledge with other teachers of English from various regions of Moldova at a daylong conference in Chisinau.

More than 150 high school and university English-language instructors gained new skills and perspectives on using technology in the classroom. The 24 participating teachers are now sharing their skills with peers back home by launching their own training sessions on blogging as a foreign language teaching tool. Through these hands-on workshops, Blogging School graduates have taught their colleagues how to leverage online platforms to improve students' speaking, reading and writing abilities. In all, more than 200 additional regional teachers throughout Moldova gained experience using online tools to enhance teaching through this initiative. Embassy Chisinau, with American Councils Moldova, will fund a second round of the EFL Blogging School for regional teachers this fall.

The embassy's public diplomacy team has also used technology in other successful outreach initiatives, one of which forged connections with teachers and youth in the separatist region of Transnistria, where American engagement is limited. To overcome the difficulties, the post reaches Transnistrian audiences through online programming, such as "Shaping the Way We Teach English," a webinar series.

Begun in 2010, the webinar series, funded by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, seeks teachers' participation—especially in Transnistria—to improve EFL skills and allow teachers to share experiences and work together across cultural and ethnic boundaries. English-language instructors from T.G. Shevchenko University branches in the Transnistrian cities of Tiraspol and Ribnita have participated in 16 webinars, along with participants from other areas of Moldova and the world.

Also in collaboration with T.G. Shevchenko University, the embassy in March launched a monthly series of in-person and online lectures at the Tiraspol American Corner. The effort was a relationship breakthrough, given the previous bureaucratic red tape and local authorities' unwillingness to engage.

Covering an academic topic of interest to students or professional development for English instructors, the lectures involved American speakers traveling to Tiraspol or speaking via an online connection. The university played a large role in deciding the topics, and the embassy connected with a key audience to discuss American ideas and values. The lectures drew impressive attendance and positive feedback, and will continue in the new academic year, beginning this fall.

Whether seeking to improve English-language instruction in Moldova or establishing relationships with remote audiences, Embassy Chisinau has used technology well. Its online programming has extended public diplomacy's reach via fairly low-cost initiatives and built ties between Americans and Moldovans, and among diverse Moldovan communities. ■



Students and faculty from T.G. Shevchenko Transnistria State University gather at the Tiraspol American Corner to connect virtually with an American scholar, who spoke in a monthly lecture series organized by Embassy Chisinau. *Embassy Chisinau photo*



Teachers from the Ribnita branch of T.G. Shevchenko Transnistria State University pose before participating in the "Shaping the Way We Teach English" webinar series. *Embassy Chisinau photo*



Aiding the Vulnerable

PEPFAR Hastens HIV Treatment for Children

By Ambassador-at-Large Deborah L. Birx, M.D., U.S. Global AIDS coordinator and U.S. Special representative for global health diplomacy

It was not easy for Zimbabwean child care worker Future Kaseke to convince her countryman Dafer Nketeza to have his 6-year-old daughter tested for HIV. True, Kaseke had convinced Nketeza himself to be tested and to start lifesaving antiretroviral treatment, but Kaseke said he wouldn't seek medical care for his daughter. "Because of the influence of the church," he said, "we did not think our daughter needed to be tested."

After three months of regular visits from Kaseke, Nketeza realized his daughter's health was deteriorating and agreed to take her for testing—she tested positive for HIV.

Now 12, his daughter is still much shorter than she should be for her age and has missed so much school due to HIV-related illness that she is two grades behind. But because she has received HIV treatment and support services, her family now hopes her health will improve.

Her father, meanwhile, has become an HIV testing and treatment advocate. "At work, when I meet my friends, I always encourage them, 'when you fall sick, it's important to go to the hospital and get tested and know [your] HIV status,' because of what I went through," he said.



As part of PEPFAR's Orphans and Vulnerable Children outreach in schools, a psychosocial support teacher quizzes students about reporting sexual, physical and other abuse they may experience.

Photo by Veronica Davison

In 2013, Zimbabwe's National HIV and AIDS Care and Treatment Programme estimated that the nation had 170,000 children under age 15 living with HIV/AIDS. Even more disconcerting, only 44 percent of these children are on antiretroviral treatment, compared with 72 percent of adults. The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is committed to reaching orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) infected or affected by HIV/AIDS and seeks to link those who have HIV/AIDS to care and treatment programs and to prevent infection among those who do not have HIV. The Department of State's Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Health Diplomacy (S/GAC) provides funding to USAID and other U.S. government implementing agencies to implement PEPFAR in partner countries.

PEPFAR's 2014 report "Strategies for Identifying and Linking HIV-Infected Infants, Children, and Adolescents to HIV Care and Treatment" made clear to PEPFAR OVC Specialist Alpha Chapendama that the OVC program needed innovation and aggressiveness in identifying and linking children to HIV care. Chapendama, a USAID-employed Zimbabwean, assessed the level of OVC access data in high-HIV areas and knew current

efforts would not meet her country's need to find and test OVCs. The data, she said, showed "we were not having a lot of children tested. So, we sat down and said, 'what can we do differently?'"

The USAID OVC program and pediatric treatment program in Zimbabwe then worked with partners to review district-level data on HIV testing among children. Program officials examined the

"Through PEPFAR and our partnerships with the many good people and institutions working on health care in Zimbabwe, we can help the country save the lives of its most vulnerable."

- Ambassador Wharton

national data and concluded that the effort was lagging. One service district had 40 percent coverage, but all the other districts were ranging between 1 and 12 percent coverage.

The USAID OVC program and its governmental and implementing partners responded by increasing the 2017 testing target from just 115,000 OVCs to all 362,000 of the OVCs that PEPFAR supports. This was possible through special funding from PEPFAR and additional resources from a public-private partnership with Elma Philanthropies.

New reporting guidance from S/GAC requires that nations receiving PEPFAR assistance report how many people are receiving support from

PEPFAR-funded OVC programs, which serve children at home, school, health facilities and throughout the community. Nations now must report data at the district level; previously, only national data were reported. PEPFAR uses these data to ensure resources are focused on core activities in high-HIV areas to maximize impact.

In Zimbabwe, USAID, with funding from PEPFAR, implements the Expanded Impact Program (EIP) with assistance from community organizations, including World Education, Inc., Hospice Palliative Care Association of Zimbabwe, Family AIDS Caring Trust and Mavambo Orphan Care. The EIP is funded through 2017 and focuses on expanding nationally

the availability of pediatric antiretroviral treatment—identifying children at risk, testing them and linking them to care if they test positive for HIV. It also involves educating children and their caregivers about prevention if they are HIV negative.



Ellsense Nketeza, 12, is two grades behind in school due to HIV-related illness.

Photo by Veronica Davison

Preliminary data show that between October 2014 and March of this year, PEPFAR, Elma Philanthropies and EIP partners supported HIV testing for 40,113 children in 17 high-burden districts. Of those tested, 5 percent were positive and referred for lifesaving treatment. This is replicated throughout the HIV-affected world, where the OVC program implementers ensure children are tested for HIV and that those testing positive are referred for treatment.

In Zimbabwe, with the support of Ambassador David Bruce Wharton, USAID is coordinating with the ministries of Health and Child Care, and Labour and Social Welfare, and with partners, to implement interventions in health care settings, schools and the community. “With children representing the majority of Zimbabwe’s total population, they truly are the future of this great nation,” Wharton explained. “Through PEPFAR and our partnerships with the many good people and institutions working on health care in Zimbabwe, we can help the country save the lives of its most vulnerable.”

Zimbabwe is one of the high-HIV countries receiving funding from the Accelerating Children’s HIV/AIDS Treatment (ACT) Initiative, a partnership of PEPFAR and the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation.

The close collaboration between government health officials, USAID and the implementing partners is critical to ensuring that the HIV/AIDS epidemic is permanently controlled. The implementation of new programs and new guidance, including ACT, coupled with the use of data is having an impact every day, saving more lives and changing the very course of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Wharton leads the PEPFAR interagency team in Zimbabwe, which is coordinated by the Zimbabwe PEPFAR Coordination Office and implemented by USAID and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. More information about PEPFAR’s investment in Zimbabwe is on the PEPFAR Dashboards, and more info about PEPFAR’s contribution to the global HIV/AIDS response is available on PEPAR's [website](#). ▣

MEETING OF MINDS



FS staff study at Naval War College

By Usha Pitts, political officer, formerly assigned to the Naval War College



During the fall bidding season, tenured Foreign Service officers and specialists at the FS-03-01 levels can take advantage of an often-overlooked learning opportunity by seeking an assignment to the Naval War College in Newport, R.I.

When Department of State employees spend a year studying national security and strategy at one of the nation's war colleges, they often attend the National Defense University in Washington, the Army War College in Carlisle, Pa., or the Marine Corps War College in Quantico, Va. For me, the Naval War College proved an interesting option in my native New England, offering a sheltered learning environment away from conference calls and evening receptions.

The Naval War College isn't strictly about naval combat, it is also a highly regarded historic institution (founded in 1884) known informally as the "Ivy League" of the war colleges. Students come from all the branches of the military, and the courses are intended for those who will someday reach the highest ranks of their professions: admirals, generals, cabinet secretaries and ambassadors. A place of rigorous standards, the college faculty focuses on teaching about national security through political, theoretical, financial, environmental, historical and strategic lenses.

For myself, I hadn't done any heavy studying in 20 years, and it was a shock to tackle 600 pages of reading per week on top of lectures and seminars. Despite the workload, I came to love the program, as did colleagues who've studied there. Jeff Izzo, an economic officer who also studied at the college

"The Naval War College was hands down the best professional experience of my career." Jeff Izzo

Opening Spread: U.S. Naval War College's Luce Hall on Coasters Harbor Island in Newport, R.I. Luce Hall is named after the first president of the college, Commodore Stephen B. Luce.
Photo by Chief Petty Officer James Foehl

last year said, “The Naval War College was hands down the best professional experience of my career.”

As a recently promoted FS-01 officer, I was admitted to the Naval War College’s “senior course” in the College of Naval Warfare. Unique among the war colleges, Newport also offers a similar curriculum in an “intermediate course” when they are FS-03s or FS-02s at the College of Naval Command and Staff. The senior course is the more strategic, but both have a fairly rigid curriculum mixing the study of security, strategy and operations. Graduates in the senior and intermediate classes receive a master’s degree in national security and strategic studies.

Students also get their pick of three electives during the year. These electives are the college’s true gems, with topics that include China policy, Abraham Lincoln, poetry and literature, Winston Churchill and cyber warfare. Kim Kelly, a consular officer, took “Self Awareness for Leaders,” a course that provides a series of tests, exercises and coaching to hone senior leadership skills. For my part, I most enjoyed “Leadership and Ethics in the Peloponnesian War,” a course on the legendary, 30-year confrontation between Athens and Sparta.

The college’s academic year is broken into three trimesters. Each trimester, students participate in seminars with an average of 15 other classmates that include about a dozen military officers. Military counterparts range in rank



Foreign Service officers and specialists attending the college during academic year 2014-2015 pose for a photo.

Photo by Usha Pitts



from lieutenant to colonel (or their Navy equivalents). Seminars usually include two or more officers from foreign countries and at least one civilian, such as someone from the Department of State or the Department of Homeland Security.

The military students come from many backgrounds and professions—doctors, submariners, fighter pilots, technicians—even chaplains. Many have held high-ranking commands, overseeing hundreds of people, while others were administrators with little supervisory experience. Some have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, while others have never left San Diego. The foreign students hail from all over the world; they contribute an interesting dimension to the quality

of discussions and tend to appreciate Department of State students, who sometimes speak their languages, know their countries—and share their confusion with the experience of immersion in U.S. military culture.

Many of my classmates had spent their whole careers in the military, and they seemed alternately fascinated and perplexed

by my outsider's perspective. It took a few months before I could “speak military” with any level of expertise, but once everyone got comfortable, the conversations in class became more lively, and even agreeably contentious.

I also found that many of my classmates, often with little previous exposure to State counterparts, had very little idea what diplomats actually do, so I spent time explaining how an embassy worked and about my experiences with State and DOD interactions. By the same token, I learned a lot from my military colleagues, from what it's like to fight from an attack helicopter, to

Previous page: Geoffrey Corn, a professor with the South Texas College of Law, leads a discussion during the Geography of War in Armed Conflict workshop at the U.S. Naval War College.
Photo by Navy MC2 Eric Dietrich



Naval War College student Air Force Lt. Col. Ryan Link makes a presentation to a panel of judges that includes, from left, David Chu, president of the Institute for Defense Analyses, and Paula Dobriansky, a senior fellow at Harvard University.

Photo by Naval War College



the trials of pushing paper at the Pentagon. I also learned the various roles of the military, and where the Department of State fits inside the larger national security apparatus.

Alongside my growing appreciation for our nation's military might, I was at times overwhelmed and bemused by the sheer size of the military, its budget and bureaucracy, and the choices of its leader. As friendships developed, I found that many of my military colleagues wrestled with similar questions.

In the end, I think all 10 Department of State students in my graduating class felt we learned as much from our classmates as we did from our classwork. Izzo, for instance, said his experience helped him understand how our nation formulates national security policy and how FSOs add value to the process.

Department of State students who attend the Naval War College see it as a career milestone, not a “sleeper post” but an assignment dedicated to examining complex international problems at strategic and philosophical levels. Those who undergo the experience leave as a different kind of diplomat. More information on senior training opportunities as well as detail assignment opportunities, including points of contact for specific programs, are available on the Career Development and Training HR intranet [site](#). ▣



Students listen to a lecture in the college's Spruance Auditorium, known affectionately as “The Big Blue Bedroom.”

Photo by Usha Pitts

Previous page: U.S. and international flags representing countries at U.S. Naval War College fly during the school's graduation day in Newport, R.I.
Photo by Chief Petty Officer James Foehl

OFFICE OF THE MONTH

GLOBAL SKILLS

Office promotes learning worldwide

By Anthony Koliha, director, Office of Global Educational Programs,
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs; Photos by Ed Warner

Each year, approximately 4.5 million students worldwide study outside of their home countries. The United States remains the top recipient of this global student mobility, with almost 900,000 international students studying here in 2013–2014, bringing global perspectives to American classrooms and communities, and contributing more than \$27 billion to the U.S. economy. In 2012–2013, about 300,000 American students studied abroad, acquiring language skills as well as relevant regional and global insights. In addition, teachers and other professionals are participating in international education, developing their skills and competencies.

The Office of Global Educational Programs works to ensure that young leaders and professionals around the world have the international skills they want and need to succeed in the global economy. The office facilitates exchanges through such initiatives as the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program, Hubert



Eythan Schiller is a program officer specializing in EducationUSA.



Maxine Lunn is an academic exchange specialist in the office.

H. Humphrey Fellowship Program, Critical Language Scholarship Program and a variety of teacher exchange programs. The office also offers community college initiatives. It also promotes international academic mobility through the EducationUSA global advising network and its recently launched U.S. Study Abroad branch.

Secretary of State Kerry has called international education a core component of diplomacy, saying it's vital "that young people absorb what true international education teaches: how to think critically, the importance of civility and a willingness to respond to contrary opinions with hard questions—not bitter denials or an insistence on dogma." An international education provides students with the skills and abilities necessary to function in a globalized society, successfully work with diverse groups of people and collaborate on such global challenges as public health, human rights and climate change.

The EducationUSA advising network of more than 400 advising centers in 170 countries promotes U.S. higher education, helping international students choose from among the more than 4,700 accredited U.S. colleges and universities. EducationUSA also assists U.S. colleges and universities with international recruitment, and its growing digital presence reaches a combined physical and virtual audience of nearly 13 million individuals each year.

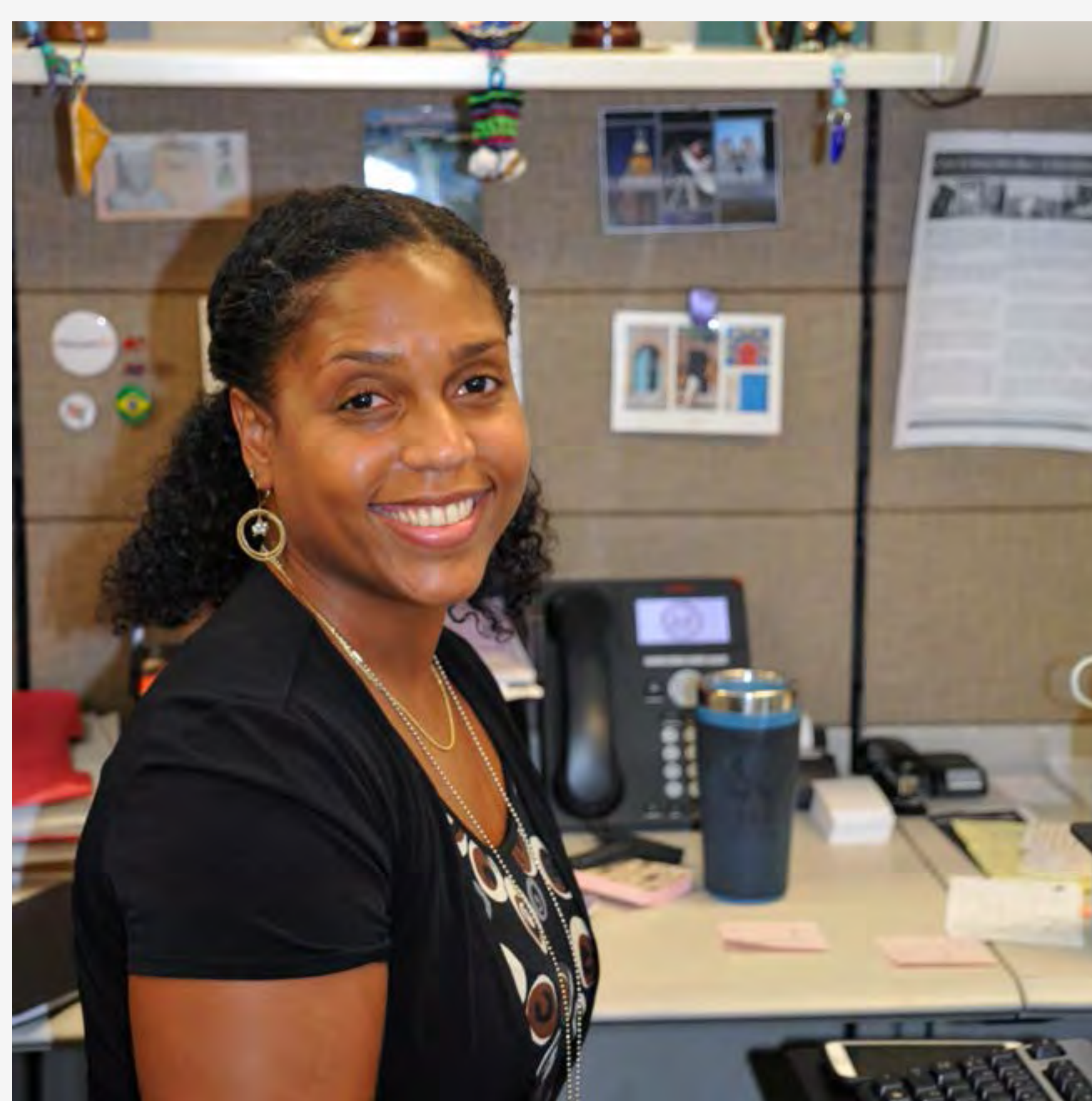
The office's new U.S. Study Abroad branch encourages more Americans to study abroad and develop global competencies. Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs Evan Ryan recently encouraged government, business and the nonprofit community to "think and work creatively together to share the values of study abroad for our workforce and society." The new branch will engage with stakeholders and fulfill the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) commitment to expand access to and diversify participation in study abroad.

"Two of our signature programs, the Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program and the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program, provide international experiences to the U.S. student population," explained program officer Angela Woods. "CLS has instilled hundreds of Americans with foreign language proficiency and an in-depth understanding of foreign cultures, while the Gilman program has broken the ceiling on minority participation in education abroad, with 56 percent of participants representing racial and ethnic minorities out of nearly 3,000 fellows annually."

The office also offers programs for professional audiences, through teacher exchange programs, the Humphrey



Betsy Devlin-Foltz takes a call in her cubicle.



Angela Woods manages the critical languages scholarship program.

Fellowship Program and the Community College Initiative. Teachers from the U.S. and abroad add an international aspect to their classrooms by sharing best practices on teaching, using technology and educating girls, or teaching about science, technology, engineering and medicine. The Humphrey fellowship, part of the Fulbright Program, provides midcareer professionals from developing countries with an academic year of intensive, graduate-level study at U.S. universities. Topics often studied include sustainable development, public health and building democratic institutions. The Community College Initiative provides early-career professionals from lower-income communities overseas with a year of education in technical fields such as information technology, management and hospitality at American community colleges. Meanwhile, the Community College Administrator Program introduces officials and educators from abroad to the American community college model as it relates to broader issues such as workforce development, vocational training and access to education.

The Office of Global Educational Programs continues to innovate. Recently, it pilot-tested EducationUSA Leadership Institutes, which provide foreign governmental representatives and senior educational administrators with professional development on key aspects of U.S. higher education. Topics have included making campuses more international, promoting university-industry linkages and achieving quality assurance and accreditation. EducationUSA Academy, another new initiative, offers summer programs on U.S. campuses that couple intensive English courses with college preparatory content, aiming to bring more international youth into U.S. higher education. The office also continues to incorporate new technology into its programming through virtual college fairs, an EducationUSA Chinese-language app, online platforms for teachers and a planned Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) for college and university administrators on U.S. study abroad.

The office also seeks to increase efficiency and improve the work environment. To that end, and borrowing concepts from the private sector, it has established multiple cross-office teams to empower individual staff members to work together to build expertise around regional and functional portfolios. The office is also using new technologies and communications tools, such as the Slack messaging app, to promote the work of its teams. "Our goal," said the office's deputy director, Heidi Manley, "is to work smarter by empowering staff, providing them with tools for success, and trusting each staff member to work in teams and represent the office within the Department, with other government agencies and with the public on topics within their portfolios."

Through hard work and innovation, the Office of Global Educational Programs reaches millions of individuals each year and boasts notable multiplier-effect successes. For example, according to program officer Paul Schelp, returning Humphrey fellows can help tackle judicial corruption in a country or region, encourage local and national governments to respect labor and human rights, or spread new low-cost technologies to rural communities across the world. "Multiply these examples by the number of fellows in the Humphrey Program, across our teacher programs and through all the other programs and services provided by our office," Schelp noted, "and we contribute to making the world a safer, better and more vibrant place for all peoples and cultures." ■

Ethics Answers

Q: The alumni club of the ambassador's alma mater has asked if the ambassador would host the club's annual board meeting at the chief of mission residence (CMR). The ambassador is a longstanding member of the club and would like to host the meeting. Is that acceptable?

A: In determining whether the ambassador may co-host an event at the CMR that benefits a private group, the post should consider whether there is a foreign policy purpose for co-hosting the event, whether undue preference is being shown the private group and whether co-hosting the event creates a real or apparent conflict of interest for the Department or the ambassador. Further, the post would need to ensure that the use of any promotional materials is appropriate, that any fundraising has been authorized and that post retains control of the guest list. Here, it does not appear there is any foreign policy purpose, and the concern regarding undue preference is considerable, given that the ambassador has a strong personal connection to the club. Thus, based on this information, the event should not be hosted at the CMR.

Ethics Answers presents hypothetical ethical scenarios Department employees might face. For help with real ethics questions, email ethicsattorneymailbox@state.gov.

Corrections

The sentence in September's Safety Scene column describing the storage of carbon monoxide-generating equipment should have read:

“Most carbon monoxide-generating equipment is kept outside the home far away from open windows, doors, vents and other occupied areas. Make sure that the equipment is installed and operated according to the manufacturer's instructions and local building codes to avoid carbon monoxide exposure.”

OCTOBER RETIREMENTS

CIVIL SERVICE

Alexander, Mildred L.
 Buford, Constance W.
 Bullock, Cordelia
 Butler, Patsy Lee
 Crowder, Dalas Thereisa
 Dugan, Hugh Timothy
 Ealy, Sandra M.
 Filip, Judith A.
 Frisbie, Jean E.
 Grabbi, Anu
 Griffin, Diana

Martin, Carroll A.
 Murray, Mary C.
 Nyce, Lynn F.
 Ortiz-Garcia, Leticia
 Povenmire, Susan L.
 Shrinarine, Brenda S.
 Soppelsa, Robert T.
 Sweikhart, Linda C.
 Urevich, Emily
 Wallace, Leah A.
 Woolfolk, Rogers J.

FOREIGN SERVICE

Alarid, David A.
 Barela, Alfredo D.
 Bazan, Daniel
 Beller, Jeffrey Adam
 Brown, Rickey Kay
 Chin, Angelika M.
 Click, Steven R.
 Corlett, Marjorie M.
 Cretz, Gene A.
 Culver, Christopher D.
 Davidson, Mark J.
 Driscoll, Richard J.
 Heim, James E.
 Jahncke, Michael S.

Johnson, Susan Rockwell
 Kelley, Henry Edward
 Koenig, John Monroe
 Lovejoy, Helen O.
 Mikulak, Robert P.
 Rennick, John H.
 Rex, Gary L.
 Rhea, Nalini
 Ries, Marcie Berman
 Sammis, John Frederick
 Sedgwick, Theodore
 Tiffany, Alan W.
 Underwood, Thomas A.
 Whitney, Colwell C.

Art & Book Fair This Month

The 55th annual Art & BookFair of the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW) will take place Oct. 9-19 in the Main State Exhibit Hall and feature thousands of used books, stamps and coins, international art and collectibles, textiles, jewelry, CDs, DVDs, maps, ephemera and more. A Collector's Corner will offer rare and unusual books. Proceeds benefit the AAFSW Scholarship Fund and initiatives that support the Foreign Service community locally and abroad. More info is available from 202-223-5796 or office@aafsw.org. ■



HR Honors Top Performers

In the Dean Acheson Auditorium, Deputy Assistant Secretaries for Human Resources Phil Lussier, far left, and Bruce Williamson, far right, stand with award recipients at HR's Awards Ceremony on Aug. 17. ■

Photo by Isaac Pacheco



Mission Celebrates ADA Anniversary

Attendees at Mission Ulaanbaatar's celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) signed a wall-sized poster of the ADA pledge at a reception at the chief of mission residence hosted by Ambassador Piper Campbell. The pledge says, "On the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disability Act, I will celebrate and recognize the progress that has been made by reaffirming the principles of equality and inclusion and recommitting my efforts to reach full societal participation for all." ■

Photo by Saruul Khishigsuren

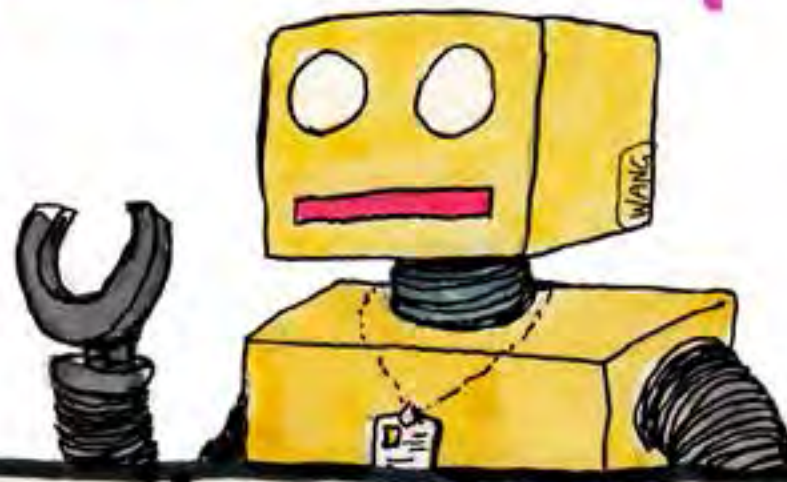
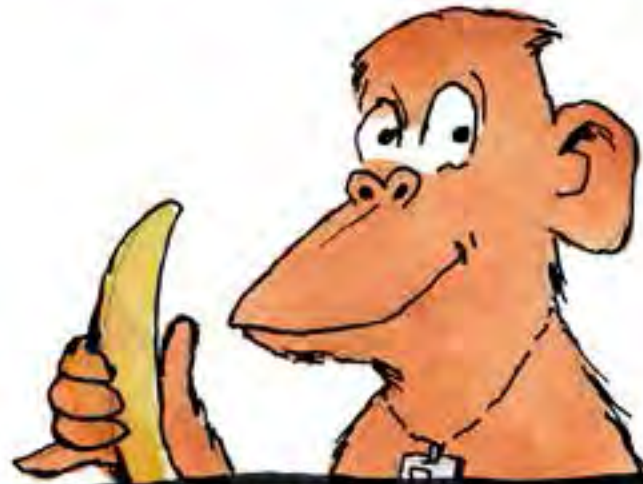


Affinity Group Focuses on Dance

Gary Bolden, a board member of a new employee affinity group focused on dance, leads line dancing for employees July 24. The Up! State Dance Collective held its first meeting in April and now holds weekly dance classes at Main State and Department annexes, , with hopes of expanding to U.S. embassies and consulates. Contacts for the group are RhonEC@state.gov and ReedSM@state.gov. ■

Photo by Michael Gross

WHO'S BEST FOR THE JOB?



	MONKEY	ROBOT	DIRK
BEING NOTE TAKER FOR DELIVERY OF A DEMARCHE	<input type="checkbox"/> HEARS NO EVIL, SEES NO EVIL, TAKES NO NOTES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORD FOR WORD ACCURACY, NEEDS EDITING	<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRACTED, THINKING ABOUT ICE DANCING
DRAFTING MEMO	<input type="checkbox"/> SHREDS AND FLINGS PAPER, POOR GRAMMAR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CORRECT BUT UNIMAGINATIVE	<input type="checkbox"/> PROCRASTINATES, USES WORD "IMPACTFULNESS"
GETTING CLEARANCES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NIMBLE, QUICKLY MOVING FROM OFFICE TO OFFICE	<input type="checkbox"/> SLOW BUT METHODICAL, MAGNETIC FEET STICK TO ESCALATOR	<input type="checkbox"/> INTERPERSONAL ISSUES, FIGHTS OVER FONT
REPRESENTATION	<input type="checkbox"/> HOWLS, BITES, STEALS BANANAS - WHAT'S THAT HE'S THROWING?!?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PREPROGRAMMED WITH AMUSING BUT INOFFENSIVE ANECDOTES, GOOD LISTENER	<input type="checkbox"/> RETELLS SAME TIRED STORY OF LAUNCHING REGIONAL CLOGGING INITIATIVE IN BANGUI
BOTTOM LINE	<input type="checkbox"/> CAN'T GET HIM OFF YOUR BACK	<input type="checkbox"/> LOWEST BIDDER PRODUCT- LIMITED WARRANTY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OH, DIRK'S NOT SO BAD

Appointments



Michele Thoren Bond
Assistant Secretary of
State for Consular Affairs

Glyn Townsend Davies
U.S. Ambassador
to Thailand

Laura F. Dogu
U.S. Ambassador
to Nicaragua

Kathleen Ann Doherty
U.S. Ambassador
to Cyprus

Jennifer Zimdahl G...
U.S. Ambassador to
Mongolia

◀ Scroll and tap image to view more ▶



Michele Thoren Bond

Assistant Secretary of State for
Consular Affairs

Michele Thoren Bond (SFS) of the District of Columbia is the new Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs. Previously, she was principal deputy assistant secretary (PDAS) in the Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) and, since April 2014, acting assistant secretary. She served as ambassador to Lesotho, DAS for Overseas Citizens Services and director of the Office of Policy Coordination and Public Affairs in CA, and as director of consular training at the Foreign Service Institute. Overseas she served in Guatemala City, Belgrade, Prague, Moscow and Amsterdam.





Glyn Townsend Davies

U.S. Ambassador to Thailand

Glyn Townsend Davies (SFS) of the District of Columbia is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand. Previously, he was senior advisor in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP) and special representative for North Korea policy. He also served as U.S. representative to the U.N. and the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna; DAS for EAP and for the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR); DCM in London; executive secretary of the National Security Council; deputy spokesman/DAS for Public Affairs; and director of the Operations Center. Other overseas posts include Melbourne, Paris and Kinshasa.





Laura F. Dogu

U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua

Laura F. Dogu (SFS) of Texas is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Nicaragua. She has most recently served as DCM in Mexico City. Prior to that, she was deputy executive director in CA. She also was consular section chief and consular officer in Mexico, Turkey and Egypt. Previously, in Washington, she was a staff assistant in CA and watch officer in the Operations Center. Overseas, she served in Ankara and San Salvador.





Kathleen Ann Doherty

U.S. Ambassador to Cyprus

Kathleen Ann Doherty (SFS) of New York is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Cyprus. Previously, she was DCM in Rome and, before that, deputy assistant secretary and director of the Office of European Union and Regional Affairs in EUR. She served as economic counselor in London. Her other overseas assignments include posts in Russia, Italy, the Dominican Republic and Brazil. In Washington, she was senior watch officer in the Operations Center.



Appointments



Jennifer Zimdahl Galt

U.S. Ambassador to Mongolia

Jennifer Zimdahl Galt (SFS) of Colorado is the new U.S. Ambassador to Mongolia. Most recently, she was principal officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Guangzhou and, before that, senior advisor in the Bureau of Public Affairs and public affairs advisor at USNATO in Brussels. She also served as deputy director of the Office of Public Diplomacy in EAP. Overseas, she served in Beijing, Shanghai, Mumbai, Taipei and Belgrade.



Ambassador Video

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Fact Sheet



Sheila Gwaltney

U.S. Ambassador to
the Kyrgyz Republic

Sheila Gwaltney (SFS) of California is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic. Most recently, she was DCM and chargé d'affaires in Moscow. Previously, she served as consul general in Saint Petersburg, senior advisor in the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization and deputy director for Eurasia in the Office of the Coordinator for Assistance for Europe and Eurasia in EUR. She was also DCM in Kyiv, DCM in Bishkek and deputy director in the Office of Russian Affairs. Overseas, her postings included Saint Petersburg, Pretoria and Panama City.

Appointments





William A. Heidt

U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia

William A. Heidt (SFS) of Pennsylvania is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia. He most recently was executive assistant to the under secretary for economic growth, energy and the environment. Before that, he was DCM in Warsaw, counselor for economic and social affairs at USUN in New York, and economic counselor in Jakarta. He has held several positions in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, and in earlier assignments overseas he served in Jakarta, Phnom Penh and Poznan.

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Perry L. Holloway

U.S. Ambassador to Guyana

Perry L. Holloway (SFS) of South Carolina is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. He served most recently as the political-military counselor in Kabul. Prior to that, he was DCM in Bogota, DCM in Paraguay and director of the narcotics affairs section in Bogota. He was also the Andean counterdrug initiative coordinator in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. His other overseas postings include Guatemala City, Quito, Tijuana and San Salvador. He began his career as a consular officer in Bogota.

Appointments





Paul Wayne Jones

U.S. Ambassador to Poland

Paul Wayne Jones (SFS) of New York is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Poland. Previously, he served as PDAS in EUR. Prior to that, he was ambassador to Malaysia; deputy special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan; DCM in Manila and at the U.S. mission to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe in Vienna; director of the Office of South Central Europe; director of the Office of the Secretariat Staff; and DCM in Skopje. His other overseas assignments include postings in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia and Russia.



Fact Sheet



Fact Sheet





Atul Keshap

U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka and Maldives

Atul Keshap (SFS) of Virginia is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the Republic of Maldives. Previously, he was DAS for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA); U.S. senior official for the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation in EAP; director for India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and Maldives in SCA; director for U.N. human rights, Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO); and director for Near Eastern and North African Affairs in the National Security Council. He also served at posts in India, Morocco and Guinea.

Sri Lanka:  Fact Sheet

Maldives:  Fact Sheet

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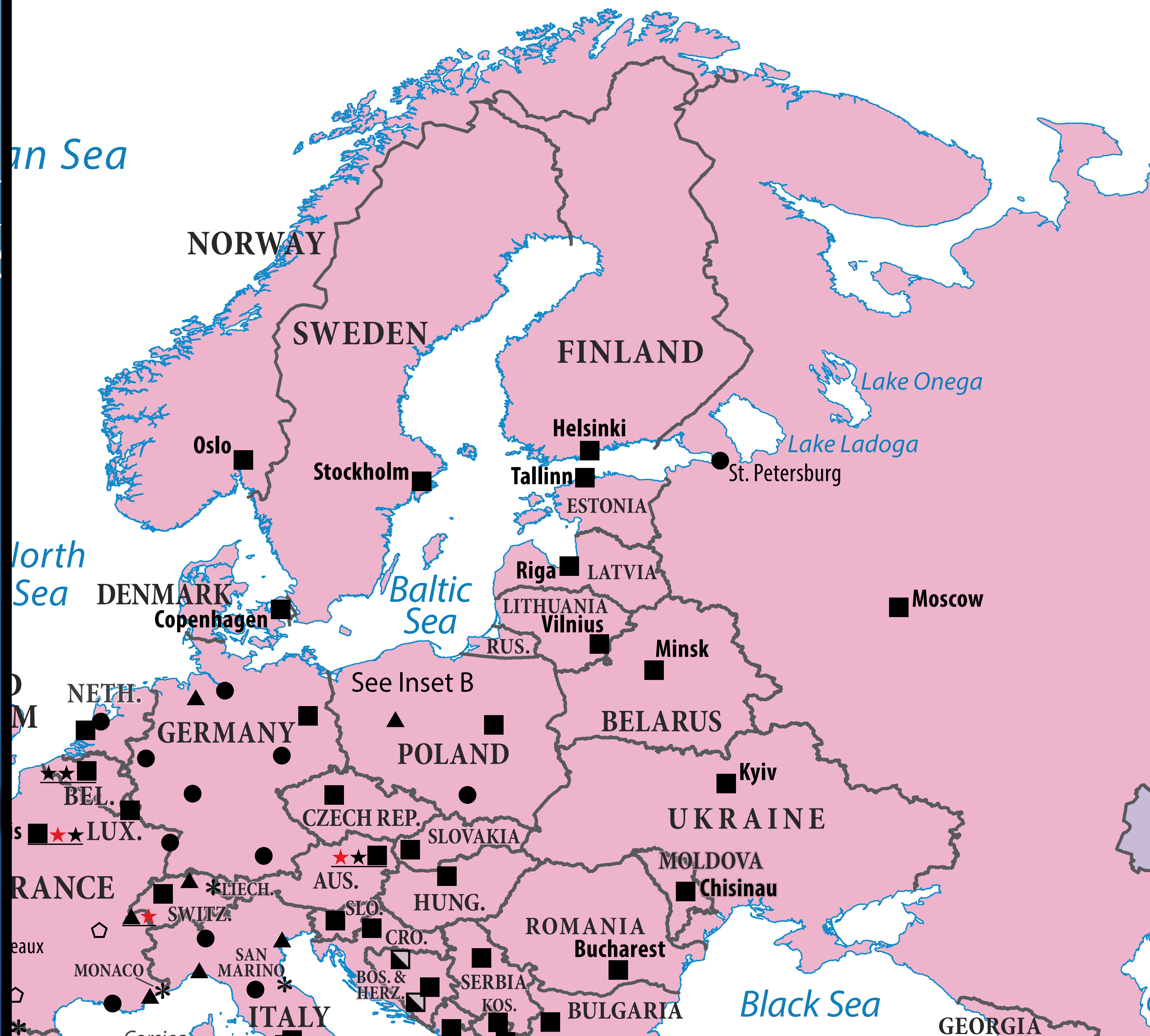
 Twitter





U.S. Ambassador to Estonia James Desmond Melville, Jr. (SFS) of New Jersey is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Estonia. Most recently, he was DCM in Berlin. Previously, he served as executive director of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs and the Bureau of International Organization Affairs. He also served as minister-counselor for management and chargé d'affaires both in London and in Moscow. His other overseas posts include Paris and Brussels, where he was administrative officer at USNATO. His earlier assignments were in the Operations Center and the Bureau of Legislative Affairs.

Appointments





Peter F. Mulrean

U.S. Ambassador to Haiti

Peter F. Mulrean (SFS) of Massachusetts is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Haiti. Prior assignments include DCM at USUN Geneva; director of interagency provincial affairs at U.S. Embassy Kabul; counselor for refugee and migration affairs at USUN Geneva; and regional director of the Middle East Partnership Initiative at U.S. Embassy Tunis. He also served as deputy director of the Office for the Promotion of Human Rights and Democracy and as deputy political counselor at USEU Brussels. Before joining the Foreign Service, he taught English in Japan and China and served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Morocco.





Alaina B. Teplitz

U.S. Ambassador to Nepal

Alaina B. Teplitz (SFS) of Illinois is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. Previously, she served as the director of the Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation. She has also been minister-counselor for management in Kabul, deputy executive director in the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, and director of management trade/craft training at FSI. Her overseas assignments include posts in Belgium, Bangladesh, Australia, Albania and Mongolia.





As part of the workshop, PLIs demonstrate a language lesson to their peers. PLI Workshop Frankfurt, June 2015 *Photo by Eva Szabo*

Improving the Post Language Experience: FSI Invests in Workshops for Instructors

By Carla Gonneville, coordinator for Foreign Service Programs, FSI School of Language Studies

Those who have taken a language class at post know that success depends on the competence and skills of post language instructors (PLIs), who can be a bridge to the local language and culture for newly arrived employees and their families. For this reason, FSI recently organized a series of regional instructor workshops to better support language learning in the field.

PLIs are charged with instilling or helping maintain the language skills necessary for our diplomats and family members during their overseas tours. Yet, PLIs face many challenges. They must support learners of all levels, from those in need of basic skills with little language background to those developing or maintaining proficiency beyond Level-3 fluency. PLIs must juggle class time with employees' hectic schedules and respond to employees' needs to master a particular aspect of their portfolios. Since launching regional post language workshops in 2014, FSI has helped PLIs balance all of these moving pieces. The workshops combine team presentations on FSI's approach to language instruction with discussions of participants' own best practices.

Workshops have been held in Panama City, Frankfurt, Muscat, São Paulo and Bangkok. At each, instructors from various posts often arrived feeling they'd been professionally isolated in their jobs. They departed more confident, knowing their professional skills were tweaked, and with a sense of community. Indeed, an unplanned result of the workshops was PLIs' spontaneous collaboration; for instance, they created their own social media forums to maintain contact and continue to engage in peer-to-peer advising and exchange of best practices.

"With 20 years' experience as a PLI," noted an instructor who

attended one of the Frankfurt sessions, "I was thrilled to take part in this workshop, organized especially for post-language instructors—the first of [its] kind! This workshop was a unique opportunity for me to network with colleagues [and] gain new insights and personal motivation to take my teaching career to a new level."

A language officer who oversees the program at post said of the workshop, "We already noticed a change in classes before our instructor's participation, based solely on some of FSI's pre-workshop activities. FSI's efforts are leading towards a greater understanding of our needs."

A key workshop topic that makes language learning at post unique is the instructors' and students' ability to integrate a wider variety of materials and visual aids into a class or one-on-one situation, more than they can at FSI. Very often students at post will bring to PLIs' attention a film or magazine headline they saw, fragments of overheard conversations, a document or letter from a host-country contact. Local field trip opportunities provided by the program—from popular tourist sites to cultural events—give students additional opportunities to absorb vocabulary and build fluency. Also, at some posts, instruction is available in local dialects or languages not taught on the FSI campus.

Recognizing the need to invest in our post language instruction to support employees' and family members' language skills at post, FSI continues to host regional workshops for PLIs. For additional information, contact

FSISLSInquiries@state.gov. ■



In Memoriam

Blacken

Bleyle

Brown

Falk

Graham

Habib

Marrs

Meysenburg

Morgan

Naylor

Ohta

Senser

Questions concerning employee deaths should be directed to the Office of Casualty Assistance at (202) 736-4302. Inquiries concerning deaths of retired employees should be directed to the Office of Retirement at (202) 261-8960. For specific questions on submitting an obituary, please contact Michael Hahn at hahnmg@state.gov or (202) 663-2230.

In Memoriam

John Dale Blacken



John Dale Blacken, 84, a retired FSO and former ambassador, died Aug. 3 near Washington, D.C., undergoing treatment for melanoma. Beginning with his first posting to Dar es Salaam in 1961, he enjoyed a long and often colorful career in Africa and Latin America. He retired after his ambassadorship to Guinea-Bissau (1986–89) and eventually returned to live there with his wife and daughters. Until his death, he was active in the removal of the land mines left by the independence and civil wars, heading a humanitarian demining NGO called Humanitarian Aid and becoming the trusted face of America for Bissau-Guineans.

In Memoriam

David Lee Bleyle



David Lee Bleyle, 66, a retired FSO, died July 2 in Portland, Ore., of complications from Crohn's disease and acute myeloid leukemia. He served in the Army before joining the Department in 1976. He was posted to Leningrad, Sydney, Stockholm, twice to both Taipei and Beijing, and finally to Chengdu as consul general. He retired to Oregon in 2003 and served on the board of trustees for three nonprofits, including the Northwest China Council in Portland. As an avid motorcyclist, he rode his neon yellow Can-Am Spyder all over the West and Northwest, and Canada.

In Memoriam

Frederick N. Brown



Frederick N. Brown, 87, a retired Voice of America editor and foreign correspondent, died March 31 in Silver Spring, Md. He served in the Army in Italy at the end of World War II and then began his journalism career at United Press International in Baltimore. He joined VOA in 1964. His foreign assignments included Japan for four years, then Nigeria and Lebanon, where he covered civil wars in both countries. Later, he was South Asia bureau chief in New Delhi, India. He retired in 1992 and went on to publish a memoir, "My Family, My Life."

In Memoriam

George Falk



George Falk, 91, a retired FSO, died June 3 in Silver Spring, Md. due to injuries sustained in a fall. He served with the Navy in the Pacific during World War II, and following college and graduate study under the G.I. Bill, he joined the Department. His posts included Havana, Turin, Madrid and Caracas. After retiring, he returned to State to work for many years in the FOIA program. In addition to spending time with family in the Washington, D.C., area, he and his wife continued to travel extensively.

In Memoriam

Virginia (Val) Graham



Virginia (Val) Graham, 64, a retired FSO, died peacefully June 23 in Greenwich, Conn. surrounded by her family and husband, retired FSO Rusty Graham. She grew up in the Foreign Service and lived with her parents in Barcelona, Panama City and Lima before joining the Department and meeting Rusty at their A-100 swearing-in ceremony in 1974. She served in Port-of Spain, San Jose, Rabat, Islamabad and Lima, and at USUN in New York. Retiring in 1996, she became chief operating officer at a law firm in Greenwich. She loved to sail on Long Island Sound and was an avid golfer.

In Memoriam

Marjorie Slightham Habib



Marjorie Slightham Habib, 95, widow of the late Ambassador Philip C. Habib, died Aug. 12 in California. She provided indispensable support to her husband throughout his Foreign Service career, including as ambassador to Korea. She accompanied him to Paris during the Vietnam Peace Talks and was instrumental to his recovery from a heart attack he suffered while serving as under secretary for political affairs. This enabled him to return as President Reagan's special envoy in the Middle East, the Philippines and Central America. She loved cooking, sports, gardening, music and discussing foreign affairs. She was devoted to her country and family.

In Memoriam

Reese E. Marrs



Reese E. Marrs, 56, a retired Diplomatic Security special agent, died July 12 at home in Tampa, Fla., after a long battle with bile duct cancer. He joined the Department in 1986 and during his career proudly protected five secretaries of state, foreign dignitaries and other persons under the authority of the U.S. Code. His TDY assignments took him all over the world, including to Baghdad. He retired in 2009, settling in Tampa, and loved golfing, cars, traveling and spending time with his daughters.

In Memoriam

Mary Ann Meysenburg



Mary Ann Meysenburg, 79, a retired FSO, died Aug. 3 at the Denver Hospice in Colorado, after a two-year struggle with small cell lung cancer. She joined the Department in 1965 and her overseas postings included Brussels, Paris, Bogota, Santo Domingo, Merida, Mexico City, London and Guadalajara. After retirement in 1991, she and her loving companion of 43 years, Jenefer, lived in Florida and then in London. They enjoyed travel and the theatre as well as their families and friendships from around the world.

In Memoriam

Myrle Virginia Jonas Morgan



Myrle Virginia Jonas Morgan, 74, a retired Civil Service employee, died July 19 in Camp Springs, Md. She grew up in Georgetown, Guyana, and was a teacher in the Guyana public school system before moving to the United States in 1966. She joined the Department in 1980 and worked in the bureaus of Western Hemisphere and Near Eastern Affairs until her retirement in 2012. She loved to dance and sing and enjoyed gospel music.

In Memoriam

Carol Naylor



Carol Naylor, 58, a Civil Service employee, died June 5 in Falls Church, Va., after a long illness. At the time, she was working in the Office of Specialized and Technical Agencies, Bureau of International Organization Affairs. Before joining the Department in 2001, she had retired as a communications specialist in the Navy. She served as part of tandem team with her husband at posts in Lusaka, Kingston, Yerevan, Maputo and Sarajevo. A voracious reader, avid bowler and lover of good pickled tomatoes, she will be deeply missed by her colleagues and friends in the Department and beyond.

In Memoriam

John T. Ohta



John T. Ohta, 67, a retired FSO, died June 23 at his home in McLean, Va., from cancer. Joining USIA in 1973, he was posted to Tokyo, Bangkok, Istanbul, Moscow and Wellington. He retired from the Department in 2005, after which he enjoyed tennis, traveling and spending time with family and friends.

In Memoriam

Robert Anton Senser



Robert Anton Senser, 94, a retired FSO, died peacefully July 29 at home in Reston, Va. He served in the Army during World War II and then in the Air Force Reserve before joining the Department in 1961. His overseas assignments as labor attaché included Algiers, Saigon, Brussels and Bonn. He also worked as a writer-editor and program director with the AFL-CIO's Asian-American Free Labor Institute. After retiring in 1983, he devoted himself to child labor and human rights issues. His book, "Justice at Work: Globalization and the Human Rights of Workers," was published in March 2009.

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End State

An antique coupe travels down a stretch of the Malecón esplanade in Havana, Cuba.

Photo by Bryan Ledgard